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ABSTRACT

"Speak Out for Children" is the quarterly newsletter of the Children's Rights Council, Inc. (CRC), a children's rights and family preservation advocacy group. The feature articles for these four issues track the progress of the access/visitation grants included in the welfare reform legislation; the grants are to help establish and administer programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents' access to and visitation of their children. Also discussed in the four newsletters are legal issues and court cases involving custody and child support payments, and summaries of research on legal and social welfare issues of non-custodial fathers, approaches to divorce, and the effect of legislation on divorce rates and child custody payments. Regular sections in the newsletter cover news of CRC lobbying efforts, congressional involvement in the organization, and CRC chapter news. (JPB)

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Strengthening Families Through Education

Assisting Children of Separation and Divorce

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SPEAK OUT FOR CHILDREN®

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Children's Rights Council, Inc.
220 "I" Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002-4362 Phone (202)547-6227

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PS 027406

Access/Visitation Grants in Welfare Law

The welfare reform law passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton provides $10 million a year for access/visitation grants to the states.

This is the most money Congress has ever provided for access/visitation.

Each state is to receive at least $50,000 this coming year, and at least $100,000 a year after that "to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents access to and visitation of their children, by means of activities including mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pickup) and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements."

The provision allows states to contract with courts, local public agencies, or non-profit private entities to run these access/visitation programs.

The access/visitation grants will last for at least six years, according to Congressional sources.

Congress provided $2 million in the 1988 Family Support Act for demonstration grants to seven states. CRC was the catalyst for those grants, working the halls of Congress for three years until the 1988 provision was passed.

"When federal officials and members of Congress saw how well the access grants worked, including mediation, educating parents about parenting, informing them of their rights as well as responsibilities, counseling, and other outreach programs, this led to the current wider funding in which all states can participate," said CRC President David L. Levy.

Because the states can contract out access services to non-profit groups, such groups should contact state officials (child support offices, the governor's office, courts) or whatever office might handle these grants, and seek to handle the programs.

CRC chapters will be working with CRC national to apply for some of the grants.

Welfare Reform Law

One of the purposes of the New Welfare Reform law is to "**encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families**".

Shaw

This provision was inserted into the law by Rep. Clay Shaw (R), chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee at the request of custody reform activists.

"Chairman Shaw is to be commended for this significant provision," said CRC

continued on page 3

Attend CRC's 11th National Conference and National Parents' Day Conference October 23 - 26, 1997 in Washington, D.C. (see page 5)

"Speak Out for Children" is published by the Children's Rights Council, Inc. Editor: David L. Levy.

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Children's
Charities of
America

About CRC

The Children's Rights Council (CRC) is a nation-wide, non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) children's rights organization based in Washington, D.C.

CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy. We favor family formation and family preservation, but if families break up, or are never formed, we work to assure a child the frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family the child would normally have during a marriage. Our motto is "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

For the child's benefit, CRC favors parenting education before marriage, during marriage, and in the event of separation. We work to demilitarize divorce between parents who are involved in marital disputes, substituting conciliation and mediation for the adversarial process, and providing for comprehensive child support. We also favor school-based programs for children at risk.

Formed in 1985 by concerned parents who have more than 40 years collective experience in divorce reform and early childhood education, CRC has chapters in 30 states and three national affiliate organizations: Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC), Parents Without Partners (PWP), and the Stepfamily Association of America (SAA).

Prominent professionals in the fields of religion, law, social work, psychology, child care, education, business, and government comprise our Advisory Panel.

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U.S. Senator (R-TN)

Welfare Reform Law

(Continued from page 1)

President David L. Levy. "It opens the door for all kinds of programs, including mediation, parenting education, counseling, and a host of other programs to encourage marriage, and two-parent relationships."

The other purposes of welfare reform are:

- to **provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives** (kinship care);
- to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by **promoting job preparation, work and marriage**;
- to **prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies** and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.

States that do the best job in meeting the four purposes of the welfare reform law (shown in **bold** above) will be eligible to share in up to 1 billion dollars in bonus grants for each of the next five years.

The new law ends the entitlement to welfare. This means that there is no longer an automatic right to welfare based on poverty. States are to spend funds on work and training for work. If welfare is received, there is a five year limit on payments.

(CRC President David L. Levy was invited to testify before a House Subcommittee on Welfare Reform on September 19, 1996. He outlined 10 ways states could implement the goals of welfare reform and therefore qualify for bonus grants. For a free copy of the testimony, contact CRC).

Parent Locator Service Expanded

The new welfare law also opens up the use of the parent locator service to enforce "child custody or visitation orders." Previously, the federal parent locator service, which taps into state motor vehicle records, social security records, and other public documents, has been used to locate more than a million parents a year who owe financial child support, but now will be available to locate parents hiding children in violation of custody or visitation orders.

Custody reform advocates have been asking for many years that the federal parent locator service be expanded in this way.

Grandparents Responsible

The welfare law also encourages states to pursue pilot programs in which the parents of a non-adult, non-custodial parent who refuses to or is unable to pay child support must pay or contribute to the child support owed by the non-custodial parent.

Child Support Provisions

The new welfare law also contains stringent provisions on child support, including requiring suspension or loss of automobile drivers' licenses, professional and recreational licenses, and confiscation of passports, for past due child support.

CAPTA Revised to Provide Relief for False Allegations

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) has long required the reporting of all suspected child abuse, but offered no relief for wilful false allegations.

Coats

Goodling

CAPTA has been amended by Congress to "eliminate blanket immunity from prosecution for persons making knowingly false allegations of child abuse or neglect. Only good faith reports will be protected by immunity," said Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN), one of the amended bill's chief sponsors, in remarks on the Senate floor September 27, 1996.

States are now free to enact laws and regulations to provide penalties for making knowingly false allegations.

The legislation, Public Law 104-235, was signed into law by President Clinton on September 3, 1996.

In his remarks on the Senate floor, Coats said "Each year, close to one million children are abused or neglected. While these numbers are staggering, we should also be concerned by the nearly 2 million false or unsubstantiated reports of child abuse and neglect that are filed wrongfully and in some cases maliciously. What this means is that case workers who are already overworked are conducting 2 million investigations at some level, possibly resulting in inappropriate interventions–including removal of the children from their homes."

Citizen Review Panels

Coats said that "In order to ensure citizen participation and public accountability of state and local child protection agencies," the new law also "requires each state to establish citizen review panels to evaluate the extent to which child protection agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities and to review the facts surrounding local child fatalities or near fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect."

(Editor's note: The law leaves to the states the decisions on how these panels are to be set up. Contact your governor, or state legislators if you wish to be appointed to a panel. Submit written recommendations from third parties about your credentials to serve on such a panel).

Under the new law, states also:

- no longer have to preserve

(Continued on page 6)

Commission Recommends Mediation, Parenting Plans, but is Silent on Joint Custody

Mandatory mediation, parenting plans, and family courts with authority "commensurate with the importance of their mission," are among the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare, in its final report issued October 15, 1996.

The 15 commissioners were appointed by President Clinton and leaders of Congress.

The report, delayed for nearly a year after the Commission ended its 12-month series of hearings and meetings, emphasized the need for involving both parents positively in the lives of their children after divorce or out-of-wedlock birth. But the Commission is silent on whether or not to encourage more joint custody.

The 218-page report, "Parenting our Children: In the Best Interest of the Nation" discusses how:

- courts can reduce the adversarial nature of custody and visitation decision-making,
- communities and religious institutions can support and strengthen families, and
- parents can be helped to make the best decisions about the emotional and financial support of their children.

The report notes that "More than a quarter of the nation's children live with only one parent and over half will live in a home with only one parent some time before they become adults. Many of these children suffer from a lack of continued presence of both of their parents in their lives to guide and nurture them and to provide necessary financial support."

The Commission's recommendations include:

- the status and resources of courts with jurisdiction over family matters be commensurate with the importance of their mission. Judge Robert Robles, the Commission's Vice-Chair said, "Family related courts have historically been given lower legal status, fewer resources, and in some instances, less experienced judges–making it more difficult for courts to give families the help they need",
- mandatory mediation to help parents resolve parenting disputes, and the development of plans by parents together to determine their future involvement in the lives of the children when they live apart,
- courts should coordinate their efforts with community resources to provide separating, divorcing and unmarried parents with a full range of supportive services,
- businesses should adopt practices that will accommodate the parenting needs and responsibilities of their employees,
- religious institutions should expand their efforts in preparing young adults for marriage, strengthening existing two-parent families and providing support for parents and children when marriages dissolve or families do not form.

Guidubaldi, Harrington File Minority Reports

Harrington

Guidubaldi

Commissioners John Guidubaldi, Ph.D., Kent State University, Ohio, and Bill Harrington, Takoma, Washington, president of The American Fathers Alliance, issued detailed minority reports.

Guidubaldi, a noted researcher on children of divorce, took the majority to task because he said it

- frequently minimized attention to its primary Congressional mandate to address issues of parental access,
- was unwilling to critically evaluate the relative merits of conflicting testimony and submitted materials,
- exercised bias in the reporting of research bearing on the central issue of shared parenting.

Harrington said the commission failed to adequately consider the fatherhood "apartheid" policy that continues to create "fathers in exile," and failed to consider vital research on unmarried fathers and fatherhood.

Harrington made 53 policy recommendations that the White House, Congress, the Democratic and Republican parties, states, courts, educators, and businesses could adopt to improve family policy which emphasizes father involvement as the optimum way to enhance child and family well-being.

Both Guidubaldi and Harrington had urged the Commission to recommend a presumption for joint custody (shared parenting), as did many witnesses at hearings held by the Commission, but the Commission report is silent on the issue of custody.

Copies of the 218-page report may be obtained free by phoning Debbie Pontisso, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in Washington, D.C. at 202-401-4548.

The report says Guidubaldi may be reached at 1327 Sheppard Drive, Kent, Ohio, 44240, and Harrington may be reached at P.O. Box 5345, Tacoma, WA 98415, 206-272-2152.

Children's Rights Council®

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a weekend of workshops and discussions

CRC's 11th national conference

★ A Summit Conference of CRC Leaders and Members ★
with Selected National Speakers
Saturday and Sunday, October 25-26, 1997

Preceded by the National Parents' Day Coalition Conference,
Thursday evening and Friday, October 23-24, 1997

Both conferences will be held inconjunction with the U.S. Department of Education

The CRC Summit Conference will feature selected nationally known speakers on Political and Legal Developments Related to Family Issues, but will also discuss:

★ grant-writing,
★ program development,
★ fundraising,
★ ways to build organizations,
★ new technologies management,
★ networking, and
★ legal and judicial changes in Congress and around the country.

Discussions led by CRC leaders in Washington, D.C. and around the country.

The National Parents' Day Coalition Conference will feature workshops and discussions on parenting, child and family issues. The highlight will be a live Satellite Broadcast. You can be a part of the National Townhall Discussion on Vital Issues facing all parents in America.

Come Network, Learn, and Have Fun at these Interesting Conferences

These conferences will be held at a hotel in the Washington, D.C. area to be announced later.

CEU's and CLEU's available.

Parents Day Coalition Cable TV Show Features CRC's Elizabeth Hickey

The National Parents Day Coalition held a conference and taped a 2-hour discussion on parenting for Cable TV at the Walt Disney Institute in Orlando, Florida on November 1-2, 1996.

Hickey

Rollins

The broadcast included Elizabeth Hickey, CRC's National Parenting Education Director, who discussed Abuse: Does it Begin with Language. Her talk focused on communication: how to prevent abuse in families by awareness of how members of the family communicate to each other. Hickey, who created Utah's first in the nation statewide program of parent education for all separating parents, is co-author of the book "Healing Hearts" and author of the video "Children: The Experts on Divorce".

The broadcast is appearing on about 40 AIN cable stations around the country, and is also appearing on some Time-Warner and Continental Cable systems.

The National Parents Day Coalition is headed by Belinda Rollins of Washington, D.C.

Rollins organized the National Parents Day Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. on July 23, 1996, where CRC received a "Legislative Achievement" award.

The following day, Rollins arranged for all parenting award winners to meet with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at the White House.

CRC President David L. Levy received the award on behalf of CRC and attended the White House ceremony.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton greets David L. Levy at White House

CAPTA Revised

(Continued from page 3)

families and reunify children with parents who abuse or neglect them, particularly in cases where a parent was convicted of murder, voluntary manslaughter or family homicide of another child.

- must include murder, voluntary manslaughter and felony assault as statutory grounds for termination of parental rights. The decision to pursue termination or to seek reunification in those cases would be determined by a state on a case-by-case basis.
- requires procedures for expedited termination of parental rights in cases involving abandoned infants.
- "provides research demonstration programs on innovative and effective new approaches, including kinship care," said Coats. "Kinship care (placing children in need with relatives) has been shown to a very effective and compassionate alternative to foster care, although other kinship care programs in some states have been less successful," said Coats.

He said that "the kinship care demonstration will enable us to ascertain where this program works and why and what we need to do to avoid any possible negative consequences."

Congressman William Goodling (R-PA), chairman of the Education and Economic Opportunities Committee, was active in the House of Representatives in steering this bill into law. Goodling has also been concerned about the need to differentiate between real abuse and false abuse allegations.

Some activists for reform wanted the new law to go even further than it did, such as totally abolishing CAPTA, so that states could establish their own laws, but Congress was not willing to abandon the federal requirement that all cases of abuse be reported. Instead, Congress authorized the states to provide safeguards for false allegations and other provisions, as mentioned above.

Results of Research

Non-Adversarial Approaches Will Help Children, Census Data Show

Non-adversarial approaches to divorce, specific visitation provisions, and joint custody are among the approaches that will help improve the relationship between non-custodial parent involvement, children's well-being, child support and custody arrangements, according to a new report based on Census Bureau data.

Westat, Inc., a major national research organization, surveyed Census Bureau data. In their final report issued August, 1996, the researchers, Christine Winquist Nord and Nicholas Zill, state that the relationship between non-custodial parent involvement, children's well-being, child support, and custody arrangements will be enhanced if America supports the following types of activities:

- Encouraging parents to establish child support agreements through a process of bargaining and mutual agreement whenever feasible, rather than through litigation and court mandate, and providing services, if needed, to assist in the process
- Encouraging couples to specify visitation provisions in their agreements.
- Encouraging contact between non-resident fathers and their children, when feasible.
- Promoting joint custody arrangements.

The researchers also surveyed the available research on the relationships mentioned above. Although they found gaps in the research, they made several key findings. They recommended, based on the research, the following:

- All persons who are involved in working with single parent families and with divorcing couples need to be made more aware of the developmental needs of children, the potential difficulties that they will face from family disruption or turmoil, and steps that could ease those difficulties.
- Given that conflict if inappropriately handled can be harmful to children and can alienate the two adults so that they cannot cooperate over matters concerning the child's well-being, it is important to provide services to reduce conflict or to express it in a healthier manner.
- Several studies showed that all the parties in a divorce experience stress. The stress can adversely affect the custodial parent's ability to function effectively; it can serve to inhibit the non-custodial parent from remaining involved in the child's life and it may affect how the child adjusts to family disruption and turmoil. More research and training on how to reduce stress is needed.
- Given that most children desire the continuing presence of fathers in their lives and that fathers may disengage from their parental responsibilities in part because they feel no sense of control over the new arrangements, steps should be taken to enable fathers when it is all possible to have a more active post-divorce role,
- There is a scarcity of research that has examined couples who never establish (child support) awards and couples who had never married each other. Such couples are particularly vulnerable economically and the children face risks as well.

The data was prepared from national census data known as SIPP (Surveys of Income and Program Participation), at the request of HHS (the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

The 112-page report may be ordered from the National Reference Center, phone 202-401-9383, in the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. Ask for "Non-Custodial Parents' Participation in Their Children's Lives: Evidence from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Volume 1, Final Report, August 14, 1996." SIPP is Census Bureau data.

Survey Says Many Fathers Don't Pay Because They Have No Money

The main reason why fathers do not pay child support is because they have no money, according to a new survey of non-custodial parents published in the Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, June, 1996 issue.

The survey, conducted by Sumati N. Dubey, University of Illinois at Chicago Jane Addams School of Social Work, published in the June, 1996 issue of the Journal, found that of fathers who do not pay child support, the following reasons were given:

- 39 percent indicated they had no money;
- 23 percent indicated the mother of the child would not allow visitation;
- 14 percent indicated that they did not have any control over how the money is spent;
- 12 percent said they were not responsible for the children because they did not want to have a child and the women were the ones who wanted to have a child;
- 12 percent indicated they were not the fathers of the children for whom child support was sought.

The fathers surveyed were drawn from the non-custodial fathers who appeared before the court to response to a summons from either the State's Attorney's office or from the Attorney General's office for nonpayment of child support in six Illinois counties, from February 1994 to June 1994. 150 fathers agreed to participate in the survey; 13 refused.

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Valuing Families...

- ___**CRC01** Parent Alienation Syndrome (PAS) and the Differentiation Between Real and False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse: Richard Gardner, M.D. (part 1 of 2)
- ___**CRC02** Parent Alienation Syndrome (PAS) and the Differentiation Between Real and False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse: Richard Gardner, M.D. (part 2 of 2)
- ___**CRC03** How To Start and Grow a CRC Chapter; Programs and Services: Bruce Kaskubar, Richard Martin, and Michael Ewing
- ___**CRC04** Working With Courts and Commissions: Cindy Ewing
- ___**CRC05** Working with your State Legislators and Congress: Ted Ell, Harvey Walden, Eric Anderson, and Kent Earnhardt
- ___**CRC06** Working With The Media: Dominick Romano and David Dinn
- ___**CRC07** Conducting Research and Documenting Evidence of Problems of Bias: John Bauserman, Don Bieniewicz and David Garrod
- ___**CRC08** Children of Divorce: Gary Neuman (part 1 of 2)
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- ___**CRC10** The Family Friendly Court System - It's Mission, Structure, Resources and Services: Michael Oddenino and Steven Messinger,
- ___**CRC11** Shared Parenting (Joint Custody) Physical and Legal: What it is, What Works, and What Doesn't: James Cook, Ed Gadrix, John Guidubaldi, Mavis Hetherington, and Ann Marie Termini (part 1 of 2)
- ___**CRC12** Shared Parenting (Joint Custody) Physical and Legal: What it is, What Works, and What Doesn't: James Cook, Ed Gadrix, John Guidubaldi, Mavis Hetherington, and Ann Marie Termini, (part 2 of 2)
- ___**CRC13** Valuing Families - The Media and The Family: Melinda Blau
- ___**CRC14** Keynote Address: Michael Oddenino, David Levy, and Harry Prillaman,
- ___**CRC15** The Move Away Case - The Important Factors in Dealing With A Significant Geographic Move By One Parent: Miriam Cohen, Harold Gold, Mavis Hetherington, Pamela Stettner, and Charles Zapf
- ___**CRC16** Mediation As An Alternative to Litigation Wars: Kathryn Gibson, and JoAnne Myers
- ___**CRC17** Child Custody Evaluations - The Role of the Experts: Don Eisenberg, John Guidubaldi, and Richard Warshak,
- ___**CRC18** How To Improve State Child Support Guidelines and Performance: Don Bieniewicz, Sara Flohr and David Ross
- ___**CRC19** Politics and the Family - Federal and State Policies and Their Impact On Families: Wade Horn, David Levy, and Travis Ballard
- ___**CRC20** Parenting Issues After Divorce - How To Do It Right: Bradford Stern, Deborah Glinka, and Jayne Major
- ___**CRC21** Parental Alienation, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence - How These Issues Affect Children: Richard Sauber, Murray Straus, Dean Tong, and Barbara Wagner
- ___**CRC22** Men's and Women's Issues As They Affect Children After Divorce: Travis Ballard, Jean Bonhomme, Marjorie Engel, and Jeffrey Leving
- ___**CRC23** The Michigan Friend Of The Court System - A Model We Can Learn From and Improve: Laurie Casey, Marie Johnson, and Matthew Radditz
- ___**CRC24** Corporal Punishment - Spanking of Children and it's Effect on Marriages: Murray Straus
- ___**CRC25** Minority Citizens - Non-Custodial Mothers, Custodial Fathers, Step Parents and Grandparents: Kay and Ray Berryhill, Helen Devine, Jerry and Nancy Fuller
- ___**CRC26** Empowering the Reform Movement: Bruce Kaskubar and David Levy

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Supervised Visitation Network

The Supervised Visitation Network will hold its annual meeting and conference at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, May 17-20, 1997

Robert B. Straus, J.D., Director, Meeting Place: Supervised Child Access Service, Cambridge, MA, a leader in the Supervised Visitation Network, recommends that "situations which require supervision for safe access include: where a non-custodial parent is impaired by alcohol or drug abuse, mental illness, or retardation; when there is a risk of abduction; when a child is refusing to visit; when a custodial parent is denying access; when there has been no prior contact or an extended interruption; or when there are contested allegations that a child is at risk for any of these reasons. *(See Family Law Quarterly, Volume 29, No. 2, Summer, 1995).*

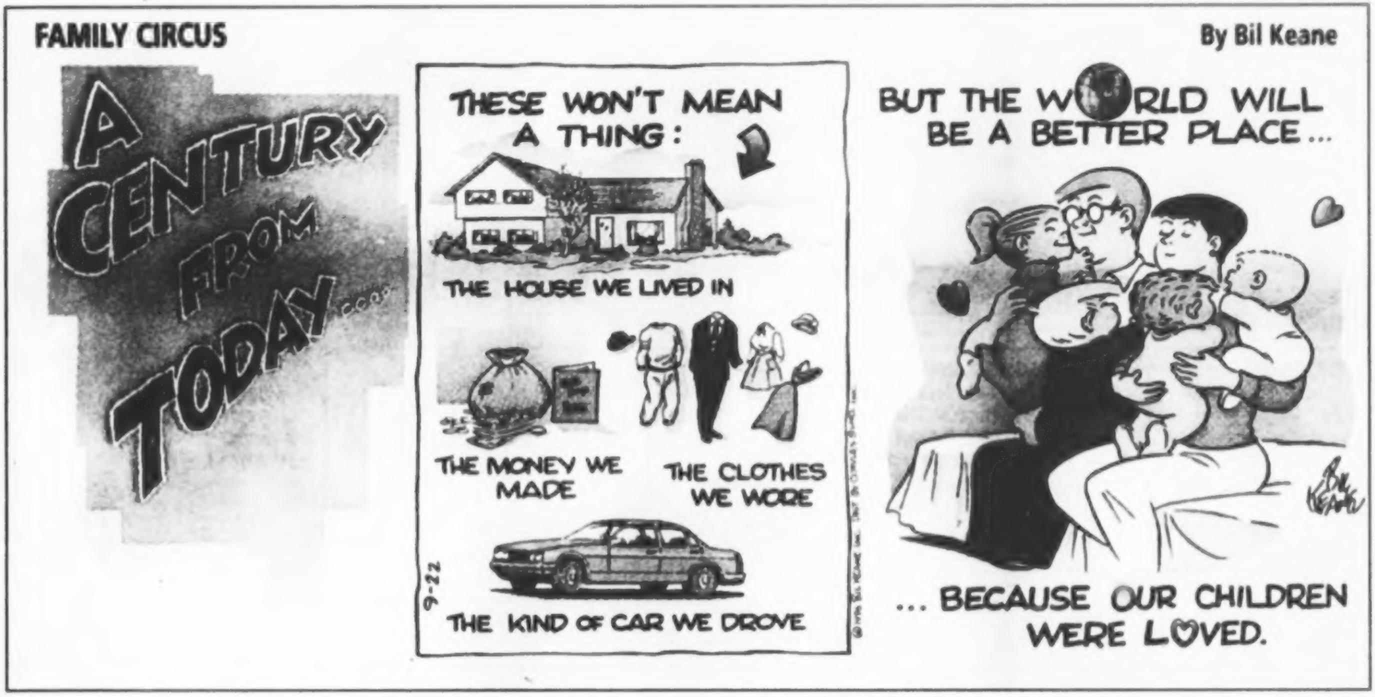
[Editor's note: Straus, CRC and others cooperated to help defeat a provision of the Crime bill in 1994 sponsored by Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN) that would have funnelled proposed federal funds for supervised visitation centers only to domestic violence programs. Opponents felt that there were issues regarding supervised visitation other than domestic violence, and Congress ultimately agreed, so that funding was to be made available to a wide range of supervised visitation providers. Despite the broader language, budget constraints have meant that little or no actual federal money has been provided for supervised visitation under the crime bill.

The question now is: when is supervised visitation called for, and when is it not, e.g. is supervised visitation appropriate for cases such as "when a custodial parent is denying access" (and there is no evidence of wrongdoing by the non-custodial parent)?

Individuals may wish to attend the conference to learn about and comment on supervised visitation issues.]

For information on the conference, contact Sheri Kass or Barbara Pope at The Family Connection, phone 561-355-2157 or fax 561-355-3175.

The headquarters of the Supervised Visitation Network is 1101 N. Fourth Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705.


FAMILY CIRCUS
By Bil Keane
A CENTURY FROM TODAY....
THESE WON'T MEAN A THING:
THE HOUSE WE LIVED IN
THE MONEY WE MADE
THE CLOTHES WE WORE
THE KIND OF CAR WE DROVE
9-22
BUT THE WORLD WILL BE A BETTER PLACE...
... BECAUSE OUR CHILDREN WERE LOVED.
BIL KEANE

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FAMILY FACTS

Photocopy and distribute the "Family Facts" on the next page! Use as hand-outs when visiting the Legislature, disseminating information to the courts or the media, or as a resource for testimony and Letters to the editor. "Family Facts" will be a regular feature of this Newsletter. Send us your verified facts (with actual copies, sources and dates) to Family Facts, CRC.

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Family Facts

No Money, No Access Given as Main Reasons for Not Paying Support

The main reason given by fathers who do not pay financial child support is because they have no money, with the second most frequent response because the mother of the child does not allow visitation.

In a study published in the Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare in June, 1996, fathers who do not owe but do not pay financial child support, gave the following reasons for non-payment:

- 39 percent indicated they had no money
- 23 percent indicated the mother of the child would not allow visitation
- 14 percent did not have any control over how the money is spent
- 12 percent were not responsible for the children because they did not want to have a child and the women were the ones who wanted to have a child
- 12 percent they said they were not the fathers of the children for whom child support was sought.

The fathers surveyed were drawn from the non-custodial fathers who appeared before the court to response to a summons from either the State's Attorney's office or from the Attorney General's office for non-payment of child support in six Illinois counties, from February 1994 to June 1994. 150 fathers agreed to participate in the survey; 13 refused.

Crime Related to Family Disintegration

Many Americans believe crime is a matter of black and white, blacks disproportionately commit crimes, whites do not. Others say the roots of crime are economic, poor people commit crimes, wealthier people do not. Still others say that crime is simply a matter of location, location, location, city dwellers are more predisposed to criminality than suburbanites or country folk, regardless of their color or relative financial status.

"They are all wrong," states Patrick F. Fagan, a researcher at the Heritage Foundation, in a review of academic studies into the causes of crime. He concludes that birth outside marriage has emerged as the single most important factor fueling crime. More daddies married to mommies–and not more prisons or cops or so-called 'third strikes'-is the solution to the nation's crime problem.

"When one factors in family structure, it turns out that the absence of marriage, not race, is the most important factor in explaining different crime rates. The rise in crime, in other words, is tied to the disintegration of marriage...The widespread popular assumption that there is an association between race and crime is false."

See a synopsis of Fagan's report in The Washington Post Outlook Section, July 10, 1994.

Voluntary Agreements, Specific Visitation, Joint Custody Recommended

The relationship between non-custodial parent involvement, children's well-being, child support, and custody arrangements will be enhanced if America supports the following approaches, according to a new report based on Census Bureau data:

- Encouraging parents to establish child support agreements through a process of bargaining and mutual agreement whenever feasible, rather than through litigation and court mandate, and providing services, if needed, to assist in the process;
- Encouraging couples to specify visitation provisions in their agreements;
- Encouraging contact between non-resident fathers and their children, when feasible;
- Promoting joint custody arrangements.

Westat, Inc., Rockville, Maryland, a major national research organization, surveyed Census Bureau data, in their final report issued August, 1996. The Westat researchers were Christine Winquist Nord and Nicholas Zill.

In the Courts

Activities During Visitation (Arkansas)

A non-custodial father may properly be ordered to make sure that his children attend Sunday school and church while they are with him, the Arkansas Court of Appeals ruled on April 3. Among other things, the father argued that the order constituted an impermissible encroachment on his visitation rights, since it required him to comply with activities instituted by the custodial parent. However, the court said that, in visitation issues, the primary consideration is what is in the best interest of the children. The purpose of the order was to ensure consistency in the religious regimen set by the mother, the court said.

[John v. Johns; Ark CtApp (en banc); No. 95-92, 4/3/96]

Shared Custody (Iowa)

Divorced parents' shared physical custody of their two children did not warrant a deviation from the Iowa child support guidelines, the Iowa Court of Appeals held on April 23. The court said that, although the parents had tailored their job schedules to eliminate the need for a babysitter, and the father exercised more daily visitation than the typical non-custodial parent, he has few overnight or prolonged visits. The court also said that the father's overtime pay was properly considered in adjusting his child support obligation, since he had supplemented his income for four years with the overtime.

[In re Reid; Iowa CtApp, No. 5-557/94-1664, 4/23/96]

College Expenses (New Jersey)

A lower court could properly end a divorced father's obligation to contribute to his daughter's college tuition, where the child and her mother viewed him solely as a "wallet," and did not consult him on the girl's education, the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division has ruled. The father had "been cut out of the picture," and denied any opportunity to be involved in his daughter's college career, the court said.

[Moss v. Nedas (Moss); NJ SuperCt AppDiv, No. A-3238-94T5; 2/20/96, released 4/16/96]

Support of Unrelated Child (Nebraska)

A man may have to support a child born to his former wife as a result of her adulterous relationship with another man during the marriage, the Nebraska Court of Appeals said on February 27. The court said that, for a year after the child was born, and before the parents separated, the ex-husband had acted as if he were the child's father, and thus had acknowledged paternity for purposes of liability for child support. However, the Appeals Court said the ex-husband was not provided with a full and fair hearing in the lower court proceedings. Thus, he still could contest the issue of whether his conduct was such as to lead to his being determined to be liable for child support for his ex-wife's child.

[Quintela v. Quintela; Neb CtApp, 4 Neb. App. 396, 2/27/96]

Father's Rights in Adoption (South Dakota)

An unwed father lost his right to challenge termination of his parental rights by waiting too long to assert those rights, the South Dakota Supreme Court ruled on March 27. The court rejected the father's argument that he should have an exception to the 60-day period, because he did not find out that he was a father until one month after the child had been born, by which time the child had already been placed with adoptive parents. The father also argued for an exception on the basis that the mother lied to the state, saying that the child's father was unknown. When a father does not know he is a parent, the child should not be made to suffer, and the state too had been deceived by the mother, the court said.

[In re Baby Boy K.; SD SupCt, No 19158, 3/27/96]

Father's Rights in Adoption (Illinois)

A 19-year old Illinois man who became a father as a result of his statutory rape of a 15-year old girl has no constitutionally protected interest in the child, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled on May 21. The Appeals Court agreed with a lower court that the man may not proceed with a damages claim against members of the girl's family and a state prosecutor for conspiring to deprive him of his parental rights. The girl had been taken to another state, and the child immediately placed for adoption without the father's consent. The Appeals Court cited the long-standing maxim that a criminal should not profit from his crime.

[Pena v. Mattox; CA 7, No. 95-2053, 5/21/96]

Support of Unrelated Child (Arkansas)

A man who was determined not to be the father of the child in question was entitled to have his child support obligation terminated, but not to have a refund of the three years worth of payments he had made to the state before the determination was made, the Arkansas Supreme Court held on February 12.

[Arkansas v. Phillippe; Ark SupCt, No. 95-529, 2/12/96]

The cases above are summarized from Family Law Reporter, and appear here by permission from the publisher, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.

The Birthday Present

An extended family learns that acceptance is a gift from the heart

By Kathryn Gibson

It was my son's tenth birthday and the family had gathered for a celebration. We looked like a normal crew: mom, a dad, an older sister, grandparents. Remains of chocolate marble cake and vanilla-bean ice cream cluttered the table, balloons floated in the hallway, and gifts lay scattered among wrapping paper, ribbons, and bows. It was a fairly typical way to ring in year number ten.

Except that this mom and dad were no longer married, having switched from husband and wife to coparents more than seven years before. And added to the mix of celebrants was Dad's significant other.”

The evening was an experiment–the first time that I had mustered enough courage to include my ex-husband's girlfriend in the festivities. Although she and my ex weren't married or sharing a house, this was a woman who spent a lot of time with my children. Translated, this was a woman who, through absolutely no effort of her own, drummed up a fair amount of emotion in me.

It wasn't easy to accept another woman having such a large role in my children's lives. She went on picnics with them, took them to movies, fairs, and museums, shared tender memories with them from which I was excluded. My daughter, Sarah, told her secrets; my son, Adam, drew pictures for her. She, in turn, bought them scented bubble bath and X-Men T-shirts.

At first, it hurt. I resented her presence at school concerts and gymnastics events. I felt uneasy at Little League games, where I would give a nod and a smile before inching my way down the bleachers or burying my nose in a book.

Shades of acceptance began to settle in when I read a book about divorce, particularly a chapter about the ex-spouse's mate. Take a look at the people in your children's lives, it said. Are they loving? Do they care about your kids? If the answer it yes, then be happy. The more people your children have to love them, the better off they will be.

With those thoughts in mind, it was time to suck in my ego and take the next step, "Would the two of you like to join us for Adam's birthday?"

I went into a frenzy of housecleaning. I baked, polished, and scrubbed, attacked the cobwebs behind the couch, and checked the glasses for spots.

Finally, I was ready. The food was superb, the birthday boy charming, the grandmother a delight with funny stories.

As the evening progressed, a cluster of nervous adults melted into a festive family group, and I came to see that my definition of family had changed. If there's love, community, and encouragement, why should the shape matter?

As for making room for another woman in my children's lives, it's natural to want to keep an eye on their love, to feel stabs of envy and possessiveness. But kids are smarter than we think. They're not quick to switch allegiance or cast off parental love. Their hearts have ample space–more love will fit if it is offered.

Partying together isn't the norm for many divorced families, nor does it have to be. Two-house families need boundaries, but more than several years into our divorce, a birthday felt like a good time to extend the family circle.

At the end of the evening, I proclaimed the party a success. Three days later, a note arrived in the mail. "Thanks for including me" my ex-husband's girlfriend wrote. "I'll admit to being a bit apprehensive, but you pulled it off."

No, I thought. We pulled it off. That night, every adult had turned inward stress into outward grace. What more could we have given the birthday boy? It was a perfect gift.

Reproduced with permission from the author. Kathryn Gibson is a previous "Best in Media" award winner from CRC for her 1990 pro-joint custody article entitled "Not Mother's Rights, Nor Father's Rights, but Family Rights". Kathryn is developing parenting education programs in Allegheny and Cumberland counties, and is the previous Pennsylvania state CRC coordinator.

Share Experience With Author

For a book he is writing, Serge Prengel, CRC coordinator in New York City, would like people to contact him who have used the experiences of divorce and being the non-custodial parent to become better parents and better people; for inclusion in a book he is writing called "The 12 Steps for Divorced Fathers." The experiences of mothers without custody are just as interesting, and will be included in the book, said Prengel. The book in progress can be seen on the internet at http://www.spacelab.net/~mission/12stepdad.html. Or phone Prengel at 212-337-3737.

Chapter News

Stronger Shared Parenting in Florida

A new Florida law says judges **must order make-up of visitation to protect the child's relationship with both parents and grandparents.**

Kline

The law, which took effect in July, 1996, also provides other remedies judges **may** impose to protect access (visitation) rights, including the option of "rotating custody (joint custody) to the other parent.

The other options that a judge **may** use when visitation is denied "without justification" are to require the custodial parent to:

- pay reasonable court costs and attorneys fees to the parent or grandparent who is denied visitation;
- attend parenting courses;
- participate in community service;
- bear the financial burden of promoting frequent and continuing contact with the child when the child lives more than 60 miles from the non-custodial parent;
- any other reasonable sanction as a result of non-compliance.

The new law also makes clear that overnights with the child may not be denied to a parent solely because of the age or sex of the child.

"This new law gives the judges the responsibility and the tools to prevent the custodial parent from denying visitation," said Kris Kline, CRC Florida coordinator.

Florida has long had a presumption for "shared parenting" (joint custody), but there have been complaints that a judge could order a modest amount of access between the child and parent, and then there is no basis for an appeal, because the parent has indeed received a "share" of access to the child. The amount of time would be very limited, but it would be a "share."

"This new law will substantially strengthen the provisions for a **meaningful** sharing of custody and access to child," said Kline.

She credits Tim Taylor, a divorced father who lives in Sarasota, for his efforts with her to get the bill passed. Kline says Taylor is "one of those little angels on earth" who goes to live in Tallahassee for the entire two-month Spring session of the legislature each year, for the sole purpose of advocating for the rights of children of divorce. "Tim knows every legislator by name," says Kline.

On another front, Kline's book "For the Sake of the Children," published in 1993, will be featured in Family Circle magazine, January 1997 issue. (The book is available through CRC).

Alabama Law Provides Option for Joint Custody

A new law in Alabama provides an option for joint custody. Previously, there was case law in Alabama that allowed judges to give joint custody, but no statute authorized it. Thus, some judges felt they did not have authority to grant joint custody, said E. D. Wilson, CRC Alabama coordinator.

Wilson

Wilson said his group would have preferred a presumption of joint custody, but that he hoped there will be more frequent joint custody under the statute than was before.

"The statute allows joint legal and physical custody", says Wilson.

The new law also codifies federal regulations which require schools that receive federal funds to make school records (academic and medical records) available to non-custodial parents.

The new law is in Alabama Code 30-3, and takes effect January 1, 1997.

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CRC Guideline Available

Copies of the model child support guideline prepared by CRC that is based on a child having two parents are still available from the federal government.

This is the first time that the federal government has ever distributed a guideline that takes into account the direct expenditures on a child by the non-custodial parent.

To obtain a copy of the federal publication, phone (202) 401-9383, which is the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Child Support Reference Center, located at 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Washington, D.C. 20447. There is no charge for the publication, entitled "Child Support Guidelines: The Next Generation", as long as supplies last.

Copies of the guideline itself as published by the government are available from CRC for $5.00 for CRC members, and $10.00 for non-members, including shipping and handling.

If you would like to contact Don Bieniewicz, author of the guideline, for his assistance in getting this guideline adopted in the states, write him at 10004 Fairoaks Road, Vienna, VA 22181, send email to **DonBien@erols.com** or phone 703-255-0837 (evenings).

CRC Conference Held in Atlanta

Here is more news from CRC's 10th national conference held April 24-28, 1996 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia.

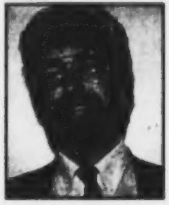
Tapes of conference talks and discussions are available (see full page ad for these tapes elsewhere in this newsletter). Some of those talks are highlighted below.

More 1996 Conference news will be in our next issue of this newsletter.

Some Conference Highlights

Financial Child Support Guidelines

In a panel on financial child support, Don Bieniewicz, the principal author of the CRC guideline published by the federal government, spoke on ways to improve state child support guidelines.



Bieniewicz

He offered the following suggestions on how activists can be most productive in their efforts to improve the guideline in their state:

- Identify the parties who can change the guideline and to whom your efforts must ultimately be directed. In some states, this is the legislature; in others, it is the judiciary. A special legislative panel or task force may be the key audience;
- Become part of the key audience, i.e., get yourself or those representing your views appointed or elected to positions with some say over your state's guideline;
- Identify early the available forums to educate the key audience about problems with the guideline;
- Recognize that the audience members each have their own goals and concerns. Speak to these concerns. Be careful to protect the egos of the audience. They are important people and need to be treated with respect;
- Present facts and evidence, not opinions, about the guideline. This is best done by bringing in legal and technical experts to point out specific errors in the guideline and provide clear and simple corrections. If possible, get the audience to pay to bring in these experts, which will improve their standing. This was done in the states of Virginia and New Jersey.
- Coordinate efforts to improve state guidelines on an interstate basis.

When People Know Better They Do Better

When better know better, they do better. This simple statement speaks volumes on what we can do to improve the state of family life today, says A. Jayne Major, Ph.D., the founder of The Parent Connection, Inc. in Los Angeles.

Major

Major, the author of "Breakthrough Parenting," said we expect people to use knowledge and skills that they have never been taught. When they fail in the most important relationships they ever have–their families, we blame them for not making better choices.

We now know that the whole dynamic of what will optimize relationships has radically changed from what our parents and grandparents knew. Yet most people parent their children and treat their spouse with outdated methods that create pure misery. This is a tragedy.

When parents attend a mere 10 classes of advanced parenting skills, Major says they report miraculous results in gaining cooperation with their children, significant others and people at work.

She gives three ideas that will revolutionize all relationships:

- Catch Them Being Good! Everyone wears a badge on their forehead that says "Make me feel important." Children beam with happiness when their parents go out of their way to "catch them" succeeding. So will all of the other people in your life.
- own responsibility for your feelings. No one controls your emotions but you. If you are mad, sad, glad or happy, it is because you make yourself so. Relationships are cleaner when people stop blaming others for how they feel.
- the absolute killer of the Good Life is negativity. Learn how to clean your thoughts every day, just like you clean you body. Practice affirmations: This is working. I am safe. Things are getting better.

It is phenomenal how fast you can get to breakthrough by training yourself to be a positive thinker.

These are the kinds of skills and knowledge taught in advanced parenting classes. Parent education is the most efficient, cost-effective way we have of stabilizing the American family. When people know better, they do better. It is as simple as that!

Change of Address

To keep newsletters and other materials coming, please notify CRC three weeks in advance of any address change. Send old and new addresses to CRC, 220 "I" Street N.W., Suite 140, Washington, DC 20002.

Around the Country

Oregon Reforming its Divorce System

Oregon is drawing upon the best resources throughout the country to create a model for parents who divorce. A 12-member broadly-representative Task Force appointed by the governor issued a status report in May, 1996.

The goal of the reform, the report said, is "to create a more civilized and constructive process for divorce–one that would put children first, provide families with choices before they make a decision to divorce, and redirect human services to intervention and prevention, rather than supporting the victims of the current process. Unlike the current system, it would avoid needless conflict, encourage problem-solving, force participants to act responsibly and shield both them and their children from lasting emotional damage.

The report further states that the goal is to create for Oregon "the most innovative and family-friendly dispute resolution system in the world."

The Task Force is considering recommending such things as:

- school-curriculum (e.g., conflict resolution and family life skills);
- community family resource centers (including a divorce-family conflict component)
- Family Courts, mediation, parent education, and access/visitation enforcement.

The 12 volunteers on the Task Force include lawyers, mediators, clergy, judges, community leaders and consumers. One of the members is Hugh McIsaac, who heads the Multnomah County (Portland) Oregon Court Services program. McIsaac previously ran the Los Angeles County Court Services program, the largest in the nation.

To make suggestions, contact the Oregon Task Force on Family Law, 1021 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 350, Portland, OR 97204, telephone 503-274-9890.

Children's Day June 1, 1997

For several years, CRC has observed that although many people have talked of the need for the U.S. to declare a national children's day, no such day has ever been officially declared. CRC is, accordingly, issuing the following proclamation.

PROCLAMATION

Whereas more than 100 countries around the world celebrate a national holiday known as "Children's Day," but the United States does not have such a holiday, and

Whereas many churches in the United States already sponsor "Children's Day" observations on the first or second Sunday in June, and

Whereas the first or second Sunday in June is nestled between mother's day and father's day, where a children's day ought to be, because of the importance of family, and

Whereas every day is children's day, just as every day is mother's day and father's day, there should be a special day to celebrate children, and the enormous contribution they make to our lives, and

Whereas children are our most precious resource, deserving and needing of our love and care, and

Whereas children need the emotional and financial support of their parents, and the caring resources of our communities, schools, and neighborhoods,

We Hereby Declare the first Sunday in June as national children's day. In 1997, that day falls on June 1.

To Celebrate Children's Day, we urge all readers of this proclamation to hold parties, parades, observations, children's activities, family celebrations, and church and synagogue activities on behalf of children on the first Sunday in June.

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Inside CRC

Stabenow Elected

Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow, a former advisor to CRC, has been elected to Congress from Michigan's eighth district. Stabenow, a democrat, defeated first time incumbent Dick Chrysler, Republican, in a battle in which environmental and labor groups backed Stabenow.

Stabenow, a member of the Michigan legislature from 1980 to 1993, led the effort in the early 1980's to broaden the Michigan "Friend of the Court": to give equal weight to informal resolution of access/visitation complaints, just as staff works to resolve financial child support complaints.

In 1988, CRC convinced Congress, after three years of effort, to fund access/visitation demonstration grants as part of the Family Support Act, "We were able to tell Congressmembers that Michigan collected $8.33 in child support for every dollar spent to collect, the highest ratio in the country," said CRC President David L. Levy.

"Debbie Stabenow sent letters to Congress, which CRC distributed on the Hill, crediting Michigan's balanced family law legislation and the balanced 'Friend of the Court', for Michigan's high child support collection rate," said Levy.

"This connection between access and higher support collection was the single most influential factor in Congress deciding to spend federal dollars for the first time in history on access/visitation."

The system in Michigan is far from perfect, Levy acknowledged, but it is the only state that has as its policy the informal resolution of both financial and emotional child support issues.

Anderson New Advisor

Anderson

CRC's newest advisor is Frank Anderson, newly elected president of Parents Without Partners, International (PWP).

Anderson, who lives in Revere, Massachusetts, just outside Boston, has long been involved in advocacy and education efforts on behalf of children and families. Anderson and CRC President David L. Levy have together made several visits to government officials in Washington over the past several years to talk about family issues.

Because PWP is affiliated with CRC, PWP's president automatically becomes an advisor to CRC. Anderson succeeds previous PWP President and CRC Advisor Linda Napolitano.

"We look forward to continued cooperation with CRC to protect the rights of children and all parents," said Anderson.

PWP, a support group for single parents, has about 80,000 members worldwide, and chapters in 50 states and affiliates in Canada.

Anderson was elected to a two-year term as president at PWP's 39th national conference in Dearborn, Michigan in July, 1996. PWP's main office is in Chicago, Illinois.

Intellectual Property Protection

Charlie Ruggiero, who obtained trademark protection for the name and logo "Children's Rights Council" and the name and logo for our newsletter "Speak Out for Children" is a specialist in trademark, patent, copyright, and licensing law. He is a partner in the law firm of Ohlandt, Greeley and Ruggiero, 1 Landmark Square, Suite 903, Stamford, CT 06901, telephone (203) 327-6067.

Donors are Appreciated

CRC thanks everyone who contributed to CRC in the charity drive that took place in all federal government offices in the Fall of 1996.

CRC is listed as number 1513 in the Children's Charities of America listing, which is part of the Independent Charities of America. We also thank those who contribute to CRC in the Washington, D.C., and San Francisco (Bay Area) United Way campaigns.

We also thank those who contribute to CRC through their United Way in some other part of the country, where we are not listed, but where employers may sometimes allow employees to designate CRC.

CRC also appreciates all those who contribute to CRC through the Global Focus credit card campaign run by MBNA America Bank, in Newark, Delaware. CRC depends on volunteer help and contributions for its existence.

If you wish to make your tax-deductible contribution direct to CRC, send it to CRC, 220 I Street, Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002.

CRC on Internet

Interest in CRC on the Internet is growing. Bruce Kaskubar, CRC coordinator in Minnesota has placed CRC on the Internet Worldwide Web. For those of you with a browser, the home page's URL is http://www.vix.com/crc/aboutcrc.htm. Bruce would like to field questions from individuals, as well as members of other groups who are interested in CRC.

Beat the Tax Man: Contribute to CRC

If you wish to consider leaving a bequest or property to CRC, please let CRC know of your generosity.

Contact your accountant or tax advisor on the best way to structure any such bequest.

Or contact CRC, and we can suggest an accountant or tax advisor to assist you.

National Affiliate Organizations and Chapters

National Affiliate Organizations

Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC)

Jennifer Isham, president
P.O. Box 27417
Houston, TX 77227-7418
Joint membership in MW/OC and CRC: $35.00 a year

Parents Without Partners (PWP)

Frank Anderson, president
401 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
312-644-6610
Members of PWP join CRC for only $20.00 a year.

Stepfamily Association of America (SAA)

Judith L. Bauersfeld, Ph.D., president
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 212
Lincoln, Nebraska 66505
(402) 477-7837
Joint membership in SAA and CRC: $35.00 for the first year
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(540) 637-3799
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(501) 772-6383

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Patricia Gehlen, coordinator
(916) 635-2590

Will Brown, president
CRC of California, Sacramento chapter
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E-mail: acw@ix.netcom.com

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* **east of the Mississippi** that do not yet have CRC chapters, contact state chapter development coordinator Michael Ewing, 3029 Yakima Road, Chesapeake, VA 23325, phone (804) 543-5993, fax (804) 543-1261.

Ask Michael Ewing or CRC for a copy of the 100-page CRC booklet that explains everything you need to know about affiliation. Enclose $15.00 for photocopying and postage.

To form additional chapters in states that already have one or more chapters, contact the state coordinator or existing state chapter head listed above.

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- ★what else would you like to do?

Contact the national office or the chapter nearest you to ask about their needs. Thank you.

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CRC is offering bulk copies of the now out-of-print CRC Book "The Best Parent is Both Parents," at a discount.

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All orders should be addressed to CRC, 220 I Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002.

If you would like copies (individual or bulk order) autographed by the book's editor, David L. Levy, just state to whom you would like it autographed (yourself, perhaps your children—give their names) and your autographed copy will be sent to you.

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CRC's General Counsel

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New CRC Directory

The 6th edition of CRC's "Parenting International Directory" is now available. The directory lists about 1,200 organizations in the U.S. and abroad involved in custody reform, mediation, parenting, and financial child support.

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The price is $12.00 for CRC members, and $15.00 for non-members.

Send any additions, corrections or deletions for the Directory to Paul Robinson, 3702 Melrose Avenue, Forestville, MD 20747, or by fax (301) 568-5812. Paul Robinson helped to prepare the directory for CRC.

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Spring 1997

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Assisting Children of Separation and Divorce

SPEAK OUT FOR CHILDREN®

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Access/Visitation Funds Available Soon

The first $10 million in access/visitation grants to the states provided by the welfare reform law should be available for distribution to the states before October 1, 1997, according to federal officials.

Another $10 million in access grant money will be available to the states for the next fiscal year that begins October 1, 1997.

Each state is to receive at least $50,000 this fiscal year, and at least $100,000 a year after that "to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents access to and visitation of their children, by means of activities including mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pickup) and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements."

The provision states that states may contract with courts, local public agencies, or nonprofit private entities to run these access/visitation programs.

The access/visitation grants will last for at least six years, according to Congressional sources.

David Gray Ross, head of the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) that will be administering the grants, held an unprecedented nationwide audio and video hookup in January 1997 of custody reform advocates who favor greater emphasis on access/visitation. Advocates were invited to Ross's Washington, D.C., office and 10 regional offices of OCSE around the country where, despite some audio and video technical problems, they provided input into how the government should prepare the regulations that are required for implementation of the grants.

The advocates spoke about the need for greater emphasis on access/visitation issues, and the problems that exist for millions of children and families in normalizing child-parent access in the event of divorce.

"We compliment Judge Ross for seeking input before the regulations were drawn up, instead of the usual government process of waiting until after the initial draft is prepared, by which time it is often too late to have meaningful input," said Margaret Wuwert, CRC Ohio coordinator, who flew to Washington, D.C., for the meeting.

Ross

David Arnaudo, project officer for OCSE, who is helping to prepare the regulations, said the states will decide the content of the grants–based on examples given in the law (see above). The regulations will only cover the required monitoring, reporting and evaluation criteria for the grants.

Continued on page 7

Attend CRC's 11th National Conference October 23 - 26, 1997 in Washington, D.C. (see pages 4-5)

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About CRC

The Children's Rights Council (CRC) is a nation-wide, non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) children's rights organization based in Washington, D.C.

CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy. We favor family formation and family preservation, but if families break up, or are never formed, we work to assure a child the frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family the child would normally have during a marriage. Our motto is "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

For the child's benefit, CRC favors parenting education before marriage, during marriage, and in the event of separation. We work to demilitarize divorce between parents who are involved in marital disputes, substituting conciliation and mediation for the adversarial process, and providing emotional and financial child support. We favor school-based programs for children at risk.

Formed in 1985 by concerned parents who have more than 40 years collective experience in divorce reform and early childhood education, CRC has chapters in 30 states and three national affiliate organizations: Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC), Parents Without Partners (PWP), and the Stepfamily Association of America (SAA).

Prominent professionals in the fields of religion, law, social work, psychology, child care, education, business, and government comprise our Advisory Panel.

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Around the Country

Idaho Suspends Licenses for Access Violations, Also

Idaho has become the first state to enact a balanced law on license revocation, by requiring that revocation or suspension of drivers' or professional licenses of parents delinquent in child support also apply to parents who violate visitation orders.

Kaiser

Teresa Kaiser, head of the Idaho child support office at the time the legislation was being considered, urged through a Welfare Reform Advisory Committee appointed by the Governor that the legislation should apply in a balanced way. Legislators agreed, and thus made the Idaho license suspension law the first in the nation to apply to emotional as well as financial child support.

The law says "Upon petition of an obligee of a child support order, a person entitled to visitation with a minor child pursuant to court order, or the department of health and welfare, a court may issue an order suspending a license."

A person would have to owe financial child support for at least 90 days, or $2,000; for visitation, the suspension could apply against someone who "has failed to comply with an order providing for visitation with a minor child."

Suspensions are at the discretion of the court, not mandatory.

See Idaho Code, Chapter 14, Title 7, Family Law License Suspensions (a new section in the Idaho code), 1996 session, effective January 1, 1997.

The law provides for a hearing, and if an order is issued to suspend a license, a procedure whereby a person can obtain a hearing to reinstate the suspended license.

Mom Concedes Divorce and Move-Away Hurt the Children

Dennis Boytim of Ohio, a long-time CRC member, has received an oral apology from his former wife Pam Crampton, who said she regrets having divorced him in 1980, because of the problems it caused their two daughters. The problems included several years of alleged sexual abuse by Pam's second husband's son against both daughters, and nearly fatal drug abuse by one daughter. Pam, who agreed to be interviewed by CRC, conceded she had put a roadblock in the way of Dennis's access to his daughters by moving 2,500 miles from Ohio to San Diego, California, shortly after the divorce, an action she says she now realizes was wrong and did damage to the children.

Boytim and two daughters in the early years

"I didn't have the insight or the professional guidance at age 23 to see the effects the divorce and move-away were going to have," said Pam. "Dennis and I had gone to counseling, but the counsellor just said that we had 'irreconcilable differences' and he didn't really help. I know I would have worked harder at a reconciliation had I known the effects the divorce was going to have on the children."

Because their oldest daughter, at age 21, now has drug problems, it has caused Dennis and Pam to talk together about the children and how the divorce affected them. They are working together to help their daughters.

Pam says "it's not acceptable to take the children away from either parent. It just doesn't work for the children not to have easy access to both parents."

Pam and Dennis are also taking courses in "coaching" people going through transitions in their lives, to help them handle the transitions better.

Dennis says the judge who handled his divorce, who would not listen to his early warnings of trouble the daughters were having, took early retirement in the mid-1980's when Dennis's divorce reform group in Erie County, in northern Ohio, picketed the court house and obtained media articles against the judge.

Pam may be reached at 16350 Woodson View Road, Poway, CA 92064

Dennis may be reached at 1315 Lake Wilmer Drive, #204-B, Sandusky, OH 44870.

Amicus Briefs

If your case is on appeal, and you would like CRC to consider writing an amicus curaie (Friend of the Court) brief, contact CRC. CRC cannot handle cases at the trial level, and we do not write the main appeal brief. An amicus brief is a supplemental brief, telling the court why this case is of significance not only to the parties in the case, but to other children and families as well. We generally need 30 to 60 days before the filing deadline. The writing of CRC amicus briefs is supervised by CRC General Counsel Michael L. Oddenino.

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Mention the CRC Conference.

Reserve your room by October 1, 1997. Washington hotels are heavily booked in October, at generally much higher rates, so book your room early!

Arrive in D.C. early, or stay late (at favorable hotel rate if booked in advance). See new FDR memorial, Holocaust Memorial; Vietnam Memorial; Georgetown, free museums, free zoo, and much, much more, just minutes from Hotel!

Registration

Photocopy and mail or fax

Name ______________ Phone (____) ________ Affiliation ______________

Address ______________ City/State/Zip ______________

Number in Party ___ Please include Name, Address and Phone Number for each person.

Registration includes all conference activities and materials, Press Conference, Reception, Saturday lunch, transportation to and attendance at National Townhall Discussion (live satellite broadcast) sponsored by National Parents Day Coalition, Sunday continental breakfast, access to Bookfair containing more than 150 books to help parents and professionals.

Rates:	**CRC Member**	**Non-Member**
Before September 1	______ $95	_____ $130
After September 1	______ $110	_____ $145

CEU's and CLE's Available:

I want ___ CEU credits, or ___ CLE credits for the state of ______________

_____ I enclose $10 for processing.

Membership or Renewal:

_____ $35 (one year) $ _______ Whether or not I can attend the conference or join, here is my extra tax-deductible contribution to help in CRC's good work.

Payment:

$ _____ Total of all above

_____ Enclosed check or money order payable to Children's Rights Council

_____ Charge to ____ Visa ____ MC ____ AMEX

Card No. ______________ Exp. date ____________

Mail to Children's Rights Council, 220 I Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002, phone 202-547-6227, or fax your registration (with charge card information) to 202-546-4CRC (4272).

National Parents' Day Coalition Conference

In addition to or alternatively, you may wish to attend the National Parents Day Coalition Conference Thursday October 22 through October 26, 1997 in Washington, DC. CRC is a supporter of the NPDC conference, which is held in conjunction with the Department of Education and the National Park Service. For information, contact NPDC at 202-530-0849, and mention CRC in order to obtain 20 percent discount off the $395 NPDC conference rate.

Results of Research

Guilty Fathers Repair Relationships with Children, "Shamed" Fathers Run or Hide from Relationships

by Nancy Heleno Obetz
CRC Evaluator of Research

Obetz

Nancy Heleno Obetz, a student researcher at George Mason University in Virginia, presented a paper at the 104th annual convention of the American Psychological Association in August 1996 in Toronto.

Obetz has found a relationship between shame and non-custodial father absence. In a report of published case study reports, the feelings and behaviors of non-custodial fathers were examined and compared. In particular, differences in cognitive, affective, and motivational features associated with shame and guilt were noted.

One of the most devastating impacts a divorce can have on children is the loss of the non-custodial parent, usually the father. Separation and divorce terminate fatherhood in the lives of millions of children.

Many emotional conditions have been attributed at least in part to father absence. Counselors, mediators, psychiatrists, and psychologists are currently able only to heal superficially the emotional trauma of this population because they do not fully understand father absence and therefore cannot work toward its cessation.

We have all seen the sobbing father reunited with children he has not seen for years, proclaiming he has loved them all along. Many of us have been confused by this, as the father's actions and his proclamation appear to be at odds. For those fathers who truly love their children, yet do not remain in contact, the clinical state of shame may be a large factor.

The first step in understanding the enormous effect shame has on father absence is to learn the complexities of shame.

Foremost is to discern that shame is not guilt. Guilt, like shame, is a negative emotion revolving around evaluation of personal behavior. The unique element of guilt in relationships is evaluations and behaviors likely to reinforce relationships. After violating an internal code of morals, the guilt-prone person evaluates his or her negative behavior and its repercussions on others. This other-oriented focus and empathy motivates behavior to correct whatever wrongdoing has occurred. Corrective behavior includes confessing, apologizing, and specifically repairing situations. A guilty person takes responsibility for his or her unacceptable behavior, rather than blaming others. By taking corrective action, the guilty person frees himself of the negative feeling.

Whereas guilty people focus on a negative behavior, shamed people focus on a negative evaluation of the entire self. Viewing the self as "bad" promotes a set of evaluations and behaviors–all of which are likely to have a detrimental effect on interpersonal relationships. Unlike a person feeling guilt, the shamed person focuses inward and negatively evaluates the self, leading to reports of intensely painful feelings. In their interpretation of the situation, these people themselves are fundamentally deficient in some vital way as a human being. This does not allow the shamed person to free himself from the negative feelings, because engaging in a particular action cannot repair or change who they are. Reports of shame include detailed descriptions such as being speechless, feeling trapped and exposed, and having the desire to hide, disappear, flee, sink into the floor and disappear, escape, and get out.

Example of Shame vs Guilt

If a person promises to drive you to your doctor's appointment, but does not show up, the guilty person will apologize, offer to drive you as soon as possible, or otherwise make up for the loss. A shamed person will internalize and blame himself, and be totally unable to relate to the fact that you missed your doctor's appointment.

The guilty father will make efforts to see his children; the shamed parent will withdraw.

The intense negative self-feelings associated with shame can be shouldered by individuals only for a period of time before coping becomes impossible and they feel they must attempt to rid themselves of those negative feelings. At this point, "defending strategies" are employed to try to dissipate the self-loathing feelings. These strategies include anger and rage, narcissistic behavior, sadness and depression, need for control, forgetting, and denial.

Repeated shame produces the most radical behaviors in people. In the case of the non-custodial father, it is important to acknowledge that many men feel shame first about the divorce itself and again with the loss of custody. Some men feel they are or were a bad husband, and post-divorce, a bad father.

In some transgressions, there is one negative behavior such as forgetting an appointment. For non-custodial fathers, the shame can be repeated each time he thinks of or sees his children. In order to liberate himself from the negative feelings of self, a father may employ the aforementioned defending strategies. Many men lash out against the system, their ex-spouse and even their children - all the while wanting a healthy rela-

Continued on page 8

Celebrate Parents Day July 27

Parents Day will be celebrated on July 27, 1997, the fourth Sunday in July, at the Sylvan Theater on the grounds of the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. Entertainment and information on parenting will be available for the afternoon and early evening events. In 1994, Congress unanimously approved and President Clinton signed a law designating the fourth Sunday in July as Parents Day, a national holiday.

The annual observance of Parents Day is spearheaded by the National Parents Day Coalition.

Everyone is invited to the Sylvan Theater on July 27. If you can't attend, you are invited to host events in your geographic area, such as a concert, an awards breakfast, or an event to help children.

For information, contact the National Parents Day Coalition (NPDC), phone 202-530-0849.

CRC will join the National Parents Day Coalition in celebrating Parents Day July 27. "It will be a fun, interesting day," said Harvey Walden, Maryland CRC coordinator.

Wear Purple Ribbons July 28-August 2

The Coalition of Parent Support ("COPS") is sponsoring the second annual Equal Parents' Week July 28 through August 3, 1997, following National Parents Day July 27. "The main activity of Equal Parents Week is the tying and wearing of purple ribbons to call attention to the inequities and injustices which parents and their children suffer as a result of the breakdown in our justice system," said Patti Diroff, event coordinator for COPS. CRC of California is participating in Equal Parents Week.

Will Brown, president of CRC of California, said "Individuals in California and throughout the country are urged to tie and wear purple ribbons to signify their support for Equal Parents Week. We're hoping to expand on the success of last year's event. CRCC and COPS will again work to get cities and counties throughout California to pass resolutions in support of the event, have a banner hung on the State Capitol, and get the media to endorse the event and cover the rally to be held at the State Capitol and at various court houses throughout the state."

For information, phone 909-591-3689.

Children's Day June 1, 1997

For several years, CRC has observed that although many people have talked of the need for the U.S. to declare a national children's day, no such day has ever been officially declared. CRC is, accordingly, issuing the following proclamation.

PROCLAMATION

Whereas more than 100 countries around the world celebrate a national holiday known as "Children's Day," but the United States does not have such a holiday, and

Whereas many churches in the United States already sponsor "Children's Day" observations on the first or second Sunday in June, and

Whereas the first or second Sunday in June is nestled between mother's day and father's day, where a children's day ought to be, because of the importance of family, and

Whereas every day is children's day, just as every day is mother's day and father's day, there should be a special day to celebrate children, and the enormous contribution they make to our lives, and

Whereas children are our most precious resource, deserving and needing of our love and care, and

Whereas children need the emotional and financial support of their parents, and the caring resources of our communities, schools, and neighborhoods,

We Hereby Declare the first Sunday in June as national children's day. In 1997, that day falls on June 1.

To Celebrate Children's Day, we urge all readers of this proclamation to hold parties, parades, observations, children's activities, family celebrations, and church and synagogue activities on behalf of children on the first Sunday in June.

Access Funds

Continued from page 1

Those familiar with federal grant requirements report that the monitoring, reporting and evaluation criteria can be formidable, and will necessitate professional help for groups that seek to obtain the grants.

Congress provided $2 million in the 1988 Family Support Act for demonstration grants to seven states. CRC was the catalyst for those grants, working the halls of Congress for three years until the 1988 provision was passed.

"Custody reform advocates got their foot in the door in 1988, and now the door is open wide 8 years later," said CRC President David L. Levy. "This funding is not a panacea, but it will definitely increase the commitment and understanding of access/parenting time issues all across the country over the next several years."

Change of Address

To keep newsletters and other materials coming, please notify CRC three weeks in advance of any address change. Send old and new addresses to CRC, 220 "I" Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, DC 20002.

Sourcebook of
American State Legislation
Update '96

ALEC Recommends 'Kinship Care' and 'Proof of Custody' as State Laws

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has recommended two "model bills" proposed by CRC for consideration by the 3,000 state legislators across the country who are members of ALEC. The bills are the "Kinship Care" and the "Proof of Custody" acts.

Kinship Care Act

The "Kinship Care Act" would encourage relatives (kin) of a child to voluntarily take care of children while their parent(s) seek work or education that would enable them to not go on welfare.

Kinship care is generally encouraged by the Welfare Reform law which Congress passed last year. But kinship care needs to be implemented by the states if it is to be successful. One purpose of kinship care is as an alternative to welfare.

The ALEC provision states that kinship care, the practice of looking to capable and willing family members as an alternative to welfare dependency, recognizes that a functioning extended family provides the child's best welfare safety net and that government programs can not and should not displace a willing, functioning family.

ALEC recommends that state legislators introduce bills that state the following:

"No person shall be eligible to receive (welfare) benefits by reason of the need of that person to support one or more dependents unless the administrator (or agency or other appropriate official) has certified, after undertaking diligent efforts, that there are no relatives or such child who are fit and willing to provide for the needs of the child without resorting to welfare dependency. Such certification shall be required prior to initial entry into the program and, thereafter, upon periodic annual reviews of eligibility. An applicant's preference for welfare payments rather than family assistance shall not be a basis for granting welfare eligibility unless the administrator (or agency or other appropriate official), has certified, after making diligent investigation, that family assistance will be detrimental to the safety of the child."

Proof of Custody Act

ALEC also recommends state laws that track whether a parent receiving welfare coverage actually has sole custody of his/her child. If one parent presents a child for welfare eligibility while the other parent (or the parents jointly) actually have legal custody of the child, a fraud has been committed.

The purpose is to prevent a parent from presenting a child for eligibility for welfare prior to a determination as to whether or not that person has custody of the child.

ALEC proposes that state legislators introduce bills with the following language:

"No funds shall be available under this Act for payment to a parent on behalf of a child unless the parent seeking eligibility has sole custody of the child or, in cases of joint custody, the parents apply jointly for benefits."

Ron Henry, David L. Levy and Laurie Casey of CRC are advisors to ALEC's Health and Human Services Task Force, which is one of several task forces which recommended model legislation for the states. California CRC president Will Brown appeared before an ALEC Task Force meeting in California in 1996 and helped obtain passage of the two model bills.

The model bills appear in "Update '96", the booklet containing model bills recommended to ALEC members.

CRC members and supporters can bring these bills to the attention of ALEC legislators in their states for introduction and passage. For a list of ALEC members in your state legislature, contact ALEC in Washington, D.C., at 202-466-3800 or contact CRC. ALEC members are conservative Republicans and Democrats.

"Shamed" Fathers

Continued from page 6

tionship with the children. Other fathers fall into clinical depression.

Withdrawal is a common behavior associated with shame and comes as a result of expending a nonsustainable amount of energy on the defending strategies. The self draws deeper inside itself to escape the agony of exposure. What makes absence so difficult to break for fathers is the cyclical relationship between shame and the defending strategies. In other words, shame causes negative feelings which in turn cause people to behave in negative ways to free themselves of the pain caused by shame. The burden of these behaviors can cause withdrawal from the people associated with the shaming, which, in turn causes the person to feel ashamed for withdrawing–and the cycle repeats, but at a deeper level with each repetition.

Many men desire to be reunited with their children, but feel paralyzed and incapable of doing so. These potential reunions could have a profound impact on the lives of countless children. Several custodial mothers have indicated that being educated on the effects of shame has assisted them in perceiving their exhusbands in a different light, thereby facilitating a relationship between children and fathers.

Ms. Obetz will be interviewing fathers to collect empirical data on this topic. For a copy of the paper presented at APA, contact her at (703) 905-0309 and leave an address.

Family Facts

Drug Use Linked to Single-Parent Households

A survey of 80,000 high school students nationwide revealed that adolescents living in single-parent homes are significantly more likely to use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco than adolescents living with both parents.

In a study between 1985 and 1989, researchers uncovered a significant relationship between family structure and adolescent use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine.

This relationship, which showed up for both young men and young women, persisted even when differences in social background–parental education, urban vs. suburban residence, region–were taken into account.

The researchers believe their findings "reaffirm the importance of two-parent families, educational success, religious commitment, and supervised activities as deterrents to adolescent drug use."

Source: John M. Wallace, Jr. and Jerald G. Buchman, "Explaining Racial/Ethnic Differences in Adolescent Drug Use: The Impact of Background and Lifestyle," *Social Problems* *38 (1991): 333-352.*

Why do Children Suffer from Divorce?

Why do children suffer when their parents divorce? Researcher Paul R. Amato reviewed the theories and evidence suggesting that for children, "parental divorce is associated with negative outcomes in...academic achievement, conduct, psychological adjustment, self-esteem, and social relationships."

He said his analysis indicates that parental divorce is not a single stressful experience for a child, but instead an "accumulation of negative evidence typically including loss of contact with the non-custodial parent, a deterioration in the quality of the relationship with the custodial parent, exposure to parental conflict, decline in standard of living, loss of contact with grandparents, and the possibility of moving. Evidence shows that these negative events of divorce can have a number of serious effects on children:

- lower academic achievement
- poorer behavioral conduct
- negative psychological adjustment
- lower socioeconomic attainment

Amato also identifies parental remarriage as an event that is often difficult and painful for children, because "adding a stepparent, and perhaps stepsiblings, to a family can be a strain for adults and children."

Furthermore, "half of all children whose parents divorce will experience a second parental divorce."

The harsh consequence for children is "repeated periods of conflict, diminished parenting, and financial hardship."

Source: Paul R. Amato, "Children's Adjustment to Divorce: Theories, Hypotheses, and Empirical Support." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *55 (1993) 23-38*

From Volume 12, Number 2, Spring 1997, *Speak Out for Children*, newsletter of the Children's Rights Council, 220 "I" Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002
phone (202) 547-6227

In the Courts

Poor Person Entitled to Appeal Prior to Rights Termination

For lack of money to pay for a court transcript, Melissa Brooks was barred from appealing a Mississippi judge's order stripping her forever of all legal rights to see her two children.

In December, 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that when a state threatens to destroy a parent's family ties, it is unconstitutional to "bolt the door to equal justice" because of poverty. The judges voted 6-3 to unlatch the door for Brooks.

"No ties are more precious than those binding parent and child, and few decrees are so grave in their consequences as a court order permanently severing the parent-child bond," Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg declared for the majority in a statement she read from the bench.

Her ruling sought to limit free appeals to indigent parents totally deprived of their children, but dissenters predicted it would affect other family relations cases as well. Justice Clarence Thomas dissented, joined fully by Antonin Scalia and partially by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist.

Brooks, a waitress now living in Memphis, TN, paid a $100 appeal but could not afford the $2,352 cost of a transcript and other documents required under Mississippi law.

"It's a terrific decision," said Brooks' civil rights lawyer, Robert McDuff, of Jackson, MS. "It's the first time the Supreme Court has said a poor person cannot be precluded from appeal in a civil case due to poverty."

Twenty states and D.C. already pay for transcripts and other court costs for poor people seeking to appeal civil cases. Another 10 states cover the costs of poverty appeals in parental rights termination cases.

- adapted from Knight-Ridder Newspapers release 12/17/96

Victim of Statutory Rape Must Pay Support for Child

He was a "normal 15-year-old" with the usual teen-age sexual passions.

She was his neighbor, a 34-year-old mom later convicted of statutory rape for engaging him in a romantic tryst that resulted in her getting pregnant.

A California appeals court ruled in December, 1996 that the young man, identified only as "Nathaniel J." in court records, is responsible for paying child support for the baby born of the illegal union.

California county and state authorities, rather than the mother, pursued the case, seeking compensation for welfare payments made for the infant girl since her birth in January 1995.

Lawyers from the state Attorney General's Office say the teenager should be responsible for the child because he was a willing sexual partner.

The two had intercourse approximately five times, in what the boy, who is now 18, told police investigators was a "mutually agreeable act."

"This a really bizarre case," said University of California social welfare professor Mary Ann Mason. "It seems unfair that he was taken advantage of, and then gets prosecuted for child support. He is considered a victim on one hand and a perpetrator on the other."

– adapted from the San Francisco Examiner, December 4, 1996

No Fine for Missed Access (Visitation)

A trial court should not have ordered a father to pay the custodial mother $20 for each day he failed to exercise his scheduled visitation with their children, the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals has held. The appeals court said that, while a trial court has broad powers to impose equitable remedies in domestic disputes, those remedies can be imposed only for breach of a legal obligation, not for breach of a moral obligation. The appeals court noted that the lower court could facilitate visitation by modifications designed to accommodate conflicts between the father's work schedule and his visitation schedule.

[Hathcock v. Hathcock, Ala CtCivApp, No. 2950707, 10/25/96]

Joint Custody For Non-Cooperating Parents

Joint custody can be granted, even if parents are unable to cooperate with each other, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals held, in interpreting Washington, D.C.'s new (1996) law creating a presumption for joint physical and legal custody. The case related to the child of two unmarried parents. The mother claimed that the unmarried status of the parents created a different situation from that of formerly married parents, and in any case the lower court had found that the parents were unlikely to agree on anything concerning the child. However, the appeals court said the District's statute favoring joint custody applies to unmarried parents. In addition, the appeals court said, the statute makes clear that "no single factor, even one as important as the parents' ability to communicate and cooperate with each other concerning their child, is necessarily controlling." According to the appeals court, "the statute recognizes the benefit of maximum involvement by both parents and does not require that the parents agree to joint custody."

[Ysla v. Lopez, DC CtApp, No. 93-FM-1198, 11/7/96]

The last two cases are summarized from Family Law Reporter. They appear here by permission of the publisher, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.

Bills In Congress

We are including important bills and resolutions in Congress affecting families that have been introduced in the 105th Congress that convened in January 1997. A bill if passed into law requires a state or person to do something; a resolution if passed expresses the wishes of Congress, but does not require action. Unless the word "Resolution" appears below, we are referring only to bills. H. or H.R. refers to the House of Representatives, S. refers to the Senate. The phone number of the committee handling the bill is provided below; you may call to check on the status of legislation, or express your views. It is even more important to let your own Representative and Senator know your views. The capital switchboard, which can connect you with the offices of all members of Congress and committees, is (202) CA4-3121 (224-3121). This is a 24-hour switchboard that can provide you night and day with names, addresses and direct phone numbers of all members of Congress. During normal weekday business hours, the switchboard can connect you with any Congressional office on Capitol Hill. To save on expenses, you can contact the Congressmembers' local branch office in your district.

Adoption

H.R. 867, introduced by Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI), and Rep. Barbara Kennelly (D-CT), to promote the adoption of children in foster care. Ron Henry, a custody reform advocate, testified before the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Clay Shaw, R-FL, in April, 1997, in favor of amending the bill to include placement of children with relatives (kinship care) as choices to be made for children. The phone number for the Human Resources Subcommittee in (202) 225-1025.

Financial Child Support

S.226, introduced by Sen. Herbert Kohl (D-WI), to establish felony violations for the failure to pay legal child support obligations and for other purposes. Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee (202) 224-5225. (CRC has urged Senator Kohl to provide similar penalties for failure to honor court-ordered visitation. Congress can do this on the same basis that it passes financial child support legislation–to improve collections, because the Census Bureau finds that access (visitation) enforcement improves financial child support payments.)

S.97, introduced by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Social Security Act to require the Internal Revenue Service to collect child support through wage withholding and to eliminate State enforcement of child support obligations other than medical support obligations. Referred to the Senate Finance Committee (202) 224-4515. (CRC has urged Sen. Kerry to provide IRS enforcement of any financial penalties for access denial that any state may impose, such as fines or court costs for missed access, for the same reason as stated in the CRC note to **S. 226** above).

H.R. 389, introduced by Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ), concerning denial of passports to noncustodial parents subject to state arrest warrants in cases of nonpayment of child support. Referred to Committee on International Relations (202) 225-5021. (Similar comment as to **S. 226** and **S. 97** above).

H.R. 399, introduced by Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL), to prohibit the provision of financial assistance by the Federal Government to any person who is more than 60 days delinquent in the payment of any child support obligations. Referred to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight (202) 225-5074. (CRC recommends "balancing" this provision by prohibiting the same assistance to anyone 60 days delinquent in honoring a court's access/visitation order).

H.R. 267, introduced by Rep. Marge Roukema (R-NJ), to require states to impose criminal penalties on persons who willfully fail to pay child support, as a condition of federal funding of State child support enforcement programs. Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (202) 225-1025. (CRC recommends the same for individuals who a court finds to willfully fail to provide court-ordered access/visitation).

Divorce

H.R. 270, introduced by Rep. Marge Roukema (R-NJ), to amend part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to provide for a set-aside of funds for States that have enacted certain divorce laws, to amend the Legal Services Corporation Act to prohibit the use of funds made available under the Act to provide legal assistance in certain proceedings relating to divorces and legal separations, and for other purposes. Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (202) 225-1025. (CRC recommends amending this provision to apply it to access/visitation and custody proceedings).

Write to Congress!

Write to House members at:

Representative —
(name of your Representative)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Write to Senators at:

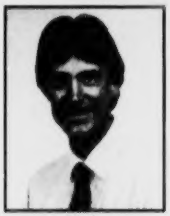
Senator — (name of your Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Inside CRC

Evaluators of Research

Research and evaluations of research are essential to any organization. CRC now has three individuals who are evaluating research for us. They are:

Guidubaldi


Kuhn

Obetz

John Guidubaldi, Ph.D., who has conducted the largest research on children of divorce in America. 699 children were evaluated initially and a large subsample (225) were followed at three and eight years after the onset of the study. This long-term research is larger than any other study of children, including that of the more well-known researcher Judith Wallerstein. In Guidubaldi's research, he came to the inescapable conclusion that children need fathers as well as mothers in their lives for healthy child development. This was apparent when poor child adjustment was predicted by father absence, low access/visitation rates, mother's ratings of low father involvement, and children's own interview responses describing minimal father participation in their daily lives. Guidubaldi, who has a commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare, teaches at Kent State and John Carroll Universities in Ohio.

D. Richard Kuhn, a computer scientist whose primary research interests are in applications of mathematical logic to software analysis and testing. He has published more than 25 papers on software analysis, formal methods, and open systems. From 1994 to 1995, he served as Program Manager for the Committee on Applications and Technology of the President's Information Infrastructure Task Force, where he designed the U.S. National Information Infrastructure Virtual Library, a Magellan 4-Star web site. He has an MS in computer science and an MBA.

Nancy Heleno Obetz has researched and evaluated research on a wide variety of topics in the human relations fields. She is a lecturer at the American University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Northern Virginia Community College at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She is a neutral monitor, as well as a visitation supervisor, of the Circuit Court of Fairfax County, Virginia.

New CRC Board Members

Two successful business executives have accepted CRC's invitation to become board members of CRC.

They are:

- **Paul R. Locigno**, president and co-founder of Rollins International, Ltd., in Virginia and veteran specialist in international business development for Asia.and,
- **Susette P. Watt**, president of Angle, Inc., an engineering and software development firm in northern Virginia.

Ed Mudrak

Ed Mudrak has spent the last 8 years handling CRC's data base, inputting information on new members, updating data, issuing reports such as labels for mailings, and handling some of CRC's financial matters. Ed comes to the CRC office five or six evenings a week. He jokes that he is the highest paid member of the CRC organization, because he started with no zeroes, and he has received increases of one zero each year for his excellent performance. He is now at 6 zeroes, and is working towards his seventh, which he hopes to receive by Christmas.

Ed has four grown children and six grandchildren. Prior to CRC, Ed was a metallurgical engineer. Ed is a very religious person, who spends much time reading and talking about the bible. He also helps elderly persons in his neighborhood with shopping, chauffeuring, and other deeds.

Ed is a true giver. We at CRC sometimes say "Thank you, Ed", to which Ed says "Thank God, not me. God brought me to CRC."

Help Us Help You!

CRC needs equipment:

- ★computers
- ★typewriters
- ★photocopy machines
- ★other office equipment

CRC needs volunteers to:

- ★do filing
- ★answer the phone
- ★work with celebrities
- ★work on the internet
- ★advocacy
- ★information
- ★fund-raising
- ★what else would you like to do?

Contact the national office or the chapter nearest you to ask about their needs. Thank you.

IT LOOKS LIKE ANY OTHER CREDIT CARD TO YOU, BUT IT'S A DONATION FOR CRC EVERY TIME YOU USE IT!
INTRODUCING THE CRC GOLD CARD and PREFERRED CARD FROM MBNA
Every time you use your CRC VISA card, CRC will receive a contribution at no additional charge to you! Apply today and help CRC! If you're going to carry a card, why not carry a CRC card? Contact CRC for information.

CRC Conference Held in Atlanta

Here are final reports on CRC's 10th national conference held April 24-28, 1996, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia.

The 40-page written conference proceedings booklet, highlighting the remarks of more than 20 of the speakers (prepared prior to the conference) is available for $5.00 each. Write to CRC.

Tapes of conferences talks and discussions are available (see full page ad for those tapes elsewhere in this newsletter.) Some of these talks are highlighted below.

Some Conference Highlights

Real Abuse Differentiated from False Allegations

Gardner

Psychiatrist Richard Gardner, M.D., gave a rapid-fire list of specific traits (15 of them) which characterize children's false allegations of sexual or physical abuse. His subjects were children he evaluated–what they said and how they said it. Gardner has popularized awareness of the "Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS)," a personality disorder in which a parent induces the alienation of a child from the child's other parent. Increasingly, alienating parents are tutoring children to accuse the targeted parent of sexual or physical abuse.

Gardner's points:

- Very telling among children couched into making false allegations is a common vocabulary. They pick up on suggestions and outright lies that one parent concocted to slander the other. They are often further coached by psychologists and pick up standard litany.
- True stories of abuse have an entirely different quality. Children's truthful accounts of sexual abuse are stated in idiosyncratic shorthand, using unique symbolism or secret words and phrases that arose out of the incestuous intimacy.
- Abused children display hypervigilence, common among people suffering from post-traumatic stress. True accounts are always unique. The degree to which the alienator/accusing parent's vocabulary is echoed by the child, parroting the same incidents and details, indicates coaching. The more concordance between the alienating, accusing parent's accounts and those of the child, the more likely that the accusations are false, made up.
- True accounts by children are laden with symbolic euphemisms. Graphic vocabulary depending on the age of the child, tends to reveal coaching. Dr. Gardner had little good to say about the run-of-the-mill "expert witness" psychologists hauled in to repeat hearsay, what the child told them, that the child has been taught to say by the alienating parent.

(Editor's note: Dr. Gardner's exposition was a two-edged sword. If he and other well-trained experts have their litmus tests to filter true from false accounts by children, the wider dissemination of the tell-tale clues may simply be adopted to "train" the perpetrators to be more sophisticated in their lies.)

Corporal Punishment Described as a Form of Child Abuse

Straus

Corporal punishment, such as spanking or slapping, is widely believed to be a form of discipline that is sometimes necessary and harmless "if done in moderation." However, even if we could be sure that "moderate" corporal punishment is harmless, no one is sure what is moderate and what is excessive, and the studies of prevalence rates are not reassuring.

So said Murray Straus, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology and Co-Director, Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire, Durham, at the 1996 CRC conference.

Straus stated that more than 90% of parents slap or spank toddlers, Just over half continue into the early teens, and a fifth continue until 17. Among parents who use corporal punishment, toddlers are hit an average of 2-3 times a week, and 13 year-olds about eight times a year. Moreover, a growing body of research suggests that trying to draw a line between moderate and excessive spanking is like trying to draw a line between moderate and excessive cigarette smoking.

Dr. Straus's research finds that the harmful side effects of corporal punishment follow a "dose response" pattern. The more corporal punishment a child experiences, the greater the probability of a harmful effect. However, even one spanking increases the risk, even though by only a small amount. Except for a lower probability of occurrence, corporal punishment puts children at risk for the same psychological problems as physical abuse and does so roughly in proportion to how often it occurs. Corporal punishment is also the primary etiological factor increasing the risk of physical abuse.

Policy Issues

Straus said

- Corporal punishment should be redefined as a form of child abuse. Legislation, such as that in Sweden and five other countries, should be

Continued on page 16

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April 24 - 28 1996— Atlanta, GA
Valuing Families...

___**CRC01** Parent Alienation Syndrome (PAS) and the Differentiation Between Real and False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse: Richard Gardner, M.D. (part 1 of 2)
___**CRC02** Parent Alienation Syndrome (PAS) and the Differentiation Between Real and False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse: Richard Gardner, M.D. (part 2 of 2)
___**CRC03** How To Start and Grow a CRC Chapter; Programs and Services: Bruce Kaskubar, Richard Martin, and Michael Ewing
___**CRC04** Working With Courts and Commissions: Cindy Ewing
___**CRC05** Working with your State Legislators and Congress: Ted Ell, Harvey Walden, Eric Anderson, and Kent Earnhardt
___**CRC06** Working With The Media: Dominick Romano and David Dinn
___**CRC07** Conducting Research and Documenting Evidence of Problems of Bias: John Bauserman, Don Bieniewicz and David Garrod
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___**CRC09** Children of Divorce: Gary Neuman (part 2 of 2)
___**CRC10** The Family Friendly Court System - It's Mission, Structure, Resources and Services: Michael Oddenino and Steven Messinger,
___**CRC11** Shared Parenting (Joint Custody) Physical and Legal: What it is, What Works, and What Doesn't: James Cook, Ed Gadrix, John Guidubaldi, Mavis Hetherington, and Ann Marie Termini (part 1 of 2)
___**CRC12** Shared Parenting (Joint Custody) Physical and Legal: What it is, What Works, and What Doesn't: James Cook, Ed Gadrix, John Guidubaldi, Mavis Hetherington, and Ann Marie Termini, (part 2 of 2)
___**CRC13** Valuing Families - The Media and The Family: Melinda Blau
___**CRC14** Keynote Address: Michael Oddenino, David Levy, and Harry Prillaman,
___**CRC15** The Move Away Case - The Important Factors in Dealing With A Significant Geographic Move By One Parent: Miriam Cohen, Harold Gold, Mavis Hetherington, Pamela Stettner, and Charles Zapf
___**CRC16** Mediation As An Alternative to Litigation Wars: Kathryn Gibson, and JoAnne Myers
___**CRC17** Child Custody Evaluations - The Role of the Experts: Don Eisenberg, John Guidubaldi, and Richard Warshak,
___**CRC18** How To Improve State Child Support Guidelines and Performance: Don Bieniewicz, Sara Flohr and David Ross
___**CRC19** Politics and the Family - Federal and State Policies and Their Impact On Families: Wade Horn, David Levy, and Travis Ballard
___**CRC20** Parenting Issues After Divorce - How To Do It Right: Bradford Stern, Deborah Glinka, and Jayne Major
___**CRC21** Parental Alienation, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence - How These Issues Affect Children: Richard Sauber, Murray Straus, Dean Tong, and Barbara Wagner
___**CRC22** Men's and Women's Issues As They Affect Children After Divorce: Travis Ballard, Jean Bonhomme, Marjorie Engel, and Jeffrey Leving
___**CRC23** The Michigan Friend Of The Court System - A Model We Can Learn From and Improve: Laurie Casey, Marie Johnson, and Matthew Radditz
___**CRC24** Corporal Punishment - Spanking of Children and it's Effect on Marriages: Murray Straus
___**CRC25** Minority Citizens - Non-Custodial Mothers, Custodial Fathers, Step Parents and Grandparents: Kay and Ray Berryhill, Helen Devine, Jerry and Nancy Fuller
___**CRC26** Empowering the Reform Movement: Bruce Kaskubar and David Levy

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Chapter News

Nebraska/Iowa is Largest CRC Chapter

The largest CRC chapter is Nebraska/Iowa, which has about 140 members in the national CRC organization. The chapter coordinators are Lyn and Bill Huerter, who in 1981 started working for a grandparents group, and were instrumental in obtaining passage of a 1995 Nebraska law that allows grandparents to petition for access to their grandchildren. The Huerters realized that grandparents would not gain meaningful access to their grandchildren until the parents had access, so they shifted to the parent-child relationship, and have been successful in changing attitudes and laws in Nebraska. One of the laws they helped get passed in 1993 provides for mediation services to enable parents to arrive at a parenting plan. Mike Hyland, an investment counselor who is the father of 6 year old Kiefer, is the chapter president.

Lynn and Bill Huerter

The new CRC Illinois coordinator is Terry Cady, a senior vice president of Bank of America, who also directs the bank's nationwide Health Care Services Unit. Terry lives in Deerfield, north of Chicago, with his wife Jana McDonough, who will help with the Illinois chapter. Terry has two children from a previous marriage, and two grandchildren. Illinoisans interested in attending a day-long chapter meeting in the Fall of 1997 should contact Terry (see address and phone number below).

Cady

Symposium of California

CRC of California was a co-host of a Fathers Symposium held at Sacramento State College on February 8, 1997. About 250 people attended workshops and discussions on fathers and families. Speakers included Charles Kobiatchi, chief judge of the Superior Court Family Law Section in Sacramento; Mikki Sorenson, an aide to California Sen. Charles Calderon, speaker of the California Senate; Amy Rudd, director of Family Court Services in Sacramento; and Bill Harrington, head of American Fathers Coalition, Takoma, Washington. At the symposium, Judge Kobiatchi praised Patricia Gehlen, CRC Coordinator in California, for her successful efforts at strengthening families. Steve Jiminez, vice-president of CRC of California, and Les Sullivan, a new member of CRC, helped plan the event.

Inauguration Help

Several members of CRC volunteered to work on President Clinton's Second Inauguration by greeting incoming dignitaries as they arrived at Washington National Airport to meet their chauffeured limousines enroute to their hotel destinations, coordinating distribution of tickets to various events, or helping coordinate the exhibits on technology, music, and arts that were free to tourists on the Mall. CRC members Harvey Walden, Michelle Naudeau, and Andy Ross were among the estimated 6,000 volunteers who helped the Inaugural Committee. "It was very interesting work," said Walden, who is CRC Maryland coordinator.

Pat Boyd New Advisor

CRC's newest advisor is Pat Boyd, who became president of Parents Without Partners, International (PWP), when Frank Anderson resigned as president in February, 1997, because of illness.

Boyd

Boyd, who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, will be president until July, 1997, when there will be an election at PWP's annual conference in Philadelphia to elect a new president for the balance of what would have been Anderson's two-year term. Anderson was elected president in July, 1996.

Boyd was administrative vice-president of PWP. She works at the University of Wisconsin and has two grown sons and three grandchildren.

She said she "hopes for great things for Parents Without Partners and the continuation of our fine relationship with CRC."

PWP, a support group for single parents, has about 80,000 members worldwide, and chapters in 50 states and affiliated in Canada.

The conference will be held at the Adams-Mark Hotel in Philadelphia July 8-13. For information, contact PWP at their headquarters in Chicago at 312-644-6610.

Directory of Resources

Now available from CRC–A complete listing of support groups and other organizations that can help people in your state. The list for each state is $5 for members and $10 for non-members. The lists are part of CRC's International Parenting Directory.

Alternatively, order the **entire** International Parenting Directory, listing 1,200 groups in the U.S. and abroad. $12 for members and $17 for non-members.

Ask for either hard-copy or disk format. The hard-copy is updated yearly; disks are updated frequently.

All credit card orders have a $10 minimum.

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More Inside CRC

CRC Horse Show Benefit

CRC will hold its first-ever Horse Show Benefit at Oatland Stables in Olney, Maryland August 2-3, 1997. This prestigious horse show will be part of the Howard County Horse Show Association's point awards series for Hunters/Jumpers. Activities will include a barbecue and pony rides for children. The event is being coordinated by Phillip E. Thommen, CRC's new Director of Marketing, with assistance by James Prettyman and Chrissy Keys Cockburn.

For information, contact CRC or Thommen at (410) 549-6220.

County Fairs

CRC is establishing Information Booths at local county fairs this summer. If interested in participant, contact CRC or Thommen at (410) 549-6220.

Donors are Appreciated

CRC thanks everyone who contributed to CRC in the charity drive that took place in all federal government offices in the Fall of 1996.

CRC is listed as number 1513 in the Children's Charities of America listing, which is part of the Independent Charities of America. We also thank those who contribute to CRC in the Washington, D.C., and San Francisco (Bay Area) United Way campaigns.

We also thank those who contribute to CRC through their United Way in some other part of the country, where we are not listed, but where employers may sometimes allow employees to designate CRC.

CRC depends on volunteer help and contributions for its existence.

If you wish to make your tax-deductible contribution directly to CRC, send it to CRC, 220 I Street, Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002.

CRC on Internet

Interest in CRC on the Internet is growing. Bruce Kaskubar, CRC coordinator in Minnesota has placed CRC on the Internet Worldwide Web. For those of you with a browser, the home page's URL is **http://www.vix.com/crc/**

Bruce would like to field questions about CRC from individuals, as well as members of other groups.

Intellectual Property Protection

Charlie Ruggiero, who obtained trademark protection for the name and logo "Children's Rights Council" and the name and logo for our newsletter "Speak Out for Children" is a specialist in trademark, patent, copyright, and licensing law. He is a partner in the law firm of Ohlandt, Greeley and Ruggiero, 1 Landmark Square, Suite 903, Stamford, CT 06901, telephone (203) 327-6067.

Beat the Tax Man: Contribute to CRC

If you wish to consider leaving a bequest or property to CRC, please let CRC know of your generosity.

Contact your accountant or tax advisor on the best way to structure any such bequest.

Or contact CRC, and we can suggest an accountant or tax advisor to assist you.

Order CRC Book and Make Money!

CRC has bulk copies of the now out-of-print CRC Book *The Best Parent is Both Parents*, which we can offer to you at a discount.

Order bulk copies (10 or more) of the book for only $4 a copy, resell the copies for the list price of $10 each, and make a profit for you or your organization! Contact CRC for more information

Conference Highlights

Continued from page 13

passed to make corporal punishment illegal, but not a criminal act.

- Primary prevention of physical abuse needs to focus on helping parents avoid corporal punishment because such a large population of physical abuse cases occur as a result of corporal punishment escalating out of control.

* Efforts to limit corporal punishment must address the entire community, not just parents, because parents are subject to criticism by relatives and friends if the child persists in a misbehavior, and the parent does not spank.

Some other speakers at the conference included:

Melinda Blau, "Valuing Families–The Media and the Family";

Miriam Galper Cohen, A.C.S.W., L.S.W., "Long Distance Parenting";

Marjorie L. Engel, "Men's and Women's Issues as They Affect Children of Divorce";

John Guidubaldi, Ph.D., "Recommendations to the National Commission on Child and Family Welfare";

E. Mavis Hetherington, P:.D. "Physical Legal Shared Parenting (Joint Custody–What it is, What Works and What Doesn't)" and "The Move-Away Case: The Important Factors in Dealing with a Significant Geographic Move by One Parent";

Wade Horn, Ph.D., "Politics and the Family: Federal and State Policies and Their Impact on Families";

Jeffrey M. Leving, Esquire, "The Fatherless Child Syndrome";

Charles A. Zapf, M.D., "Distance and Divorce - The Move-Away Case".

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National Affiliate Organizations

Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC)
P.O. 77. Box 27417
Houston, TX 77227-7418
Joint membership in MW/OC and CRC: $35.00 a year

Parents Without Partners (PWP)
Pat Boyd, president
401 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
312-644-6610
Members of PWP join CRC for only $20.00 a year.

Stepfamily Association of America (SAA)
Judith L. Bauersfeld, Ph.D., president
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 212
Lincoln, Nebraska 68505
(402) 477-7837
Joint membership in SAA and CRC: $35.00 for the first year
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CRC WANTS CHAPTERS IN EVERY STATE!!!

For development of chapters in states that do not yet have any CRC chapters, contact national CRC office at (202) 547-6227

Join CRC, then ask for a copy of the 100-page CRC booklet that explains everything you need to know about affiliation. The cost of the booklet is $15.00.

To form additional chapters in states that already have one or more chapters, contact the state coordinator or existing state chapter head listed above.

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Thank You, Contributors!

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CRC Guideline Available

Copies of the model child support guideline prepared by CRC that is based on a child having two parents are still available from the federal government.

This is the first time that the federal government has ever distributed a guideline that takes into account the direct expenditures on a child by the non-custodial parent.

To obtain a copy of the federal publication, phone (202) 401-9383, which is the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Child Support Reference Center, located at 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Washington, D.C. 20447. There is no charge for the publication, entitled "Child Support Guidelines: The Next Generation", as long as supplies last.

Copies of the guideline itself as published by the government are available from CRC for $5.00 for CRC members, and $10.00 for non-members, including shipping and handling.

If you would like to contact Don Bieniewicz, author of the guideline, for his assistance in getting this guideline adopted in the states, write him at 10004 Fairoaks Road, Vienna, VA 22181, contact him via email at DonBien@erols.com, or phone 703-255-0837 (evenings).

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Access/Visitation Grant Money Available Now

A substantial portion of the first $10 million in grants provided by the Welfare Reform law to promote access/visitation should be distributed to the states by September 30, 1997.

Each state is eligible to receive at least $50,000, but under a formula based in part on the number of single parents in a state, some large states could qualify for up to $500,000 or more in funds.

The process for the states is simple: all they had to do was complete an application form provided by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, saying what they would like to do with the money.

After receiving the funds, states will have until August 1998 to spend the funds on the programs listed in the application.

The welfare reform law states that the purpose of the funding is "to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents' access to and visitation of their children."

Federal officials are only considering applications that provide funds for one or more of the seven programs listed by Congress in the Welfare Reform Law. They are: mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pickup), and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements."

Another round of grants in which each state will receive at least $100,000 will be awarded after October 1 (and each year thereafter). So states could obtain two grants rather quickly during this year, once before October 1, and again after October 1.

The welfare law says that states can pass through the funds to "court systems and nonprofit groups."

Family Support Network

The Children's Rights Council is currently introducing "The Family Support Network" to those states interested in obtaining access/ visitation funding. The conceptual brainchild of Laurie Casey, CRC Director of Development, with the assistance of Lori Mesli, Chairman, CRC of Vermont, "The Family Support Network" is the foundation on which America's children and their parents can build more ben-

Continued on page 3

CRC Summer 1997 Interns (l to r) DorothyJo Yankoskie, Elyse Weidhorn, Brandon Tidwell, and Anna Stinchcomb with Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND)
North Dakota was ranked by CRC as the best state to raise a child. (See page 15)

Attend CRC's 11th National Conference October 23 - 26, 1997 in Washington, D.C.

PS 027406

"Speak Out for Children" is published by the Children's Rights Council, Inc. Editor: David L. Levy.

Contributors to this Issue: Don Bieniewicz, Harvey Walden, Phillip Thommen, David Dinn; college student interns Ben Rogers, College of William and Mary; Anna Stinchcomb, Miami University (Ohio); Brandon Tidwell, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor; Elyse Weidhorn, Cornell University; DorothyJo Yankoskie, Susquehanna University. Newsletter layout by Kathleen L. Ballard

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About CRC

The Children's Rights Council (CRC) is a nation-wide, non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) children's rights organization based in Washington, D.C.

CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy. We favor family formation and family preservation, but if families break up, or are never formed, we work to assure a child the frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family the child would normally have during a marriage. Our motto is "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

For the child's benefit, CRC favors parenting education before marriage, during marriage, and in the event of separation. We work to demilitarize divorce between parents who are involved in marital disputes, substituting conciliation and mediation for the adversarial process, and providing for emotional and financial child support. We also favor school-based programs for children at risk.

Formed in 1985 by concerned parents who have more than 40 years collective experience in divorce reform and early childhood education, CRC has chapters in 32 states and three national affiliate organizations: Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC), Parents Without Partners (PWP), and the Stepfamily Association of America (SAA).

Prominent professionals in the fields of religion, law, social work, psychology, child care, education, business, and government comprise our Advisory Panel.

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Surprisingly, Liberals Conclude that Money Has Little Impact on the Well-Being of Poor People

From an article in *U.S. News & World Report*, June 2, 1997

by David Whitman

Conservatives have long claimed that very poor families and their children fail because the parents are unlike other parents, while liberals have countered that poor families and their kids are just like everyone else—except that they have less money.

Two new books by left-leaning academics have surprisingly reinforced the conservative argument. Susan Mayer's *What Money Can't Buy*, published by Harvard University Press, and the forthcoming *Consequences of Growing Up Poor*, edited by Greg Duncan and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn for the Russell Sage Foundation, both conclude that income per se has a smaller impact on how poor children fare than many Americans—and most traditional liberals—believe.

At the conclusion of their 610-page tome, Duncan and Brooks-Gunn report that they and their fellow researchers found no evidence that "income transfers alone would produce a dramatic improvement in the physical health, mental health or...behavioral development of (low-income) children."

Unlike many other studies that use one-time snapshots of the poor, both books rely on new research that tracks poor families over years, even decades. Mayer calculates that even if policymakers miraculously managed to double the income of the poorest 20 percent of families, the national teen-childbearing rate would drop only from 20 percent to 18 percent, the high school dropout rate would go from 17.3 percent to 16.1 percent, and the mean number of years people were in school would rise from 12.80 to 12.83. She concludes, too, that doubling poor families' income would hardly change the proportion of young women who become single mothers and might actually increase idleness among young men by reducing their incentive to work.

Reluctantly, Mayer reaches a very unliberal conclusion: Parents' character—their skills, diligence, honesty, and good health—probably matter more to children's prospects than money. "Although children's opportunities are unequal," she writes, "income inequality is not the primary reason."

Duncan and Brooks-Gunn aren't quite that bleak. They, too, conclude that income alone has almost no impact on the odds that poor adolescents will drop out of school, bear a child out of wedlock, attend college, avoid poverty as an adult, or be in bad health. But they do find that when poor parents have more money, their children's aptitude and educational achievement scores rise substantially, up until about the age of 5.

The extra income enables parents to provide preschoolers with more books, educational toys, and opportunities for travel, and it also appears to boost their children's subsequent chances of finishing high school.

Nonetheless, the researchers did not find that income early in life had much impact years later on poor children's behavior or health.

One immediate implication of these findings is that the new welfare reform law could have a mixed impact on poor children.

The good news is that adolescents whose families suffer a modest income loss in coming years may not be damaged much as a result.

The bad news is that...if parents become nearly destitute, their children are likely to suffer with them.

Access/Visitation

Continued from page 1

eficial and ongoing relationships.

Casey says, "By identifying and matching community-based service providers with volunteers and other interested individuals, the project brings together the emotional and financial support necessary to nurture a healthy and safe environment for children and their parents to pursue or continue their parent-child relationships. Its ultimate goal, therefore, is to instill not only the importance of both parents in a child's life, but more importantly, the ongoing community support necessary for a child to successfully thrive in a multi-family environment."

CRC is working with several interested states, as well as interested state chapters. While state chapters are identifying local service providers, CRC President David L. Levy, Casey and Mesli are continuing communications with political and administrative personnel at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

It is the intention of Casey and Mesli to establish this much-needed program throughout the U.S., with or without federal funding. "To us, the needs of children are far too great to ignore," they said. "And it is our belief that because there exists such an abundance of interest, local community leaders and parents will not allow such an opportunity to slip by."

Casey and Mesli are currently implementing such a program in Vermont. On March 1, 1997, "The Family Tree Access Center" began offering families a low-cost or no-cost opportunity to nurture beneficial outcomes for their children while increasing parent awareness of the rewards of cooperative parenting.

For more information and or assistance in helping your state pursue the development of the Family Support Network, contact Laurie Casey at 518-942-3366, or David L. Levy at 202-547-6227.

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Levy

The CRC View

by David L. Levy

In 1985, when CRC first began, we were the only organization talking about the need of a child for two parents. Now, years later, as the data piles up about the harm that many children suffer from divorce, and the need of children for fathers as well as mothers for healthy childhood development, many organizations, authors, and the media are talking the same language.

"David L. Levy and CRC were voices in the wilderness 12 years ago," founding CRC member Walter Kuckes of Minnesota told us recently. "You were talking about the need of children for two parents long before it became a popular issue."

Just recently, noted researcher Judith Wallerstein reported that childhoods spent in unhappy solitude, adolescence roiled by drug and alcohol abuse, adulthood compromised—are the stark legacies for children of divorce.

A full quarter century after their parents divorce, children remain emotionally troubled, Wallerstein found. Haunted by lingering memories of the divorce and hurtful aftermath, the children shy away from intimacy, are mistrustful of marriage, and fear starting families of their own.

Half of these studied got deeply involved with drugs and alcohol.

One third ended their education with high school. While others continued their education and entered the working world, they did not match their parents earning levels.

Their overall trend: downward.

Wallerstein was echoing what all other researchers on divorce, including John Guidubaldi, Sanford Braver, and Joan Kelly, have found.

And that is, in general: divorce is a long-time stressor of children. I once talked with a 6th grade teacher who said that she could generally spot the children of divorce in her classroom. They were usually more troubled, did less well in problem solving, and had more emotional problems.

These are 11 and 12 year old children, and a perspicacious teacher was able to spot which ones came from divorced households!

Was the teacher infallible? No. Was she 100% right in her ability to spot children from divorced families? No. Did she mean children of divorce *always did worse? Of course not. Many children of divorce do well.*

It is just that on balance, this teacher was finding what the researchers have found—divorce creates more problems and hurdles for children to overcome.

This and future *newsletters will carry articles on consumer-oriented issues such the tax consequences of divorce, legal issues, the new record keeping (accounting) you may be responsible for in divorce, and other issues relating to maintaining your relationship with your children. The purpose of these articles will be to better educate our readers on issues of importance to them and their families.*

In addition, a regular column by CRC President David L. Levy (and sometimes a guest column by others) will talk about policy issues and changes in the U.S. that affect our readers.

The "sleeper effect" means that many of those problems do not surface for many years following the divorce, such as the mistrust of marriage in the children's lives.

The Children's Rights Council knows that research is the fundament of any education and advocacy organization, but we have never been content to only evaluate the research, and lament the problems.

Our focus has always been on problem solving. We have, with the support of our chapters and members, offered solutions to the larger community of political leaders, commentators, and the public.

We have said that we know marriage is the best insulation for children. But while America struggles to restore the culture of marriage that prevailed for ages in all cultures prior to the divorce revolution of the 1970's, what are we to do with the children of divorce? Just ignore them? Or only focus on financial support?

Hardly. We have preached the message that children need emotional as well as financial support. We have said "The Best Parent is Both Parents." Not to criticize single parents, who do all they can for their children. But to work for joint custody (shared parenting), mediation, parenting education, and the demilitarization of divorce.

We have told countless people who call our office that the problem is not your lawyer, your children, or your ex-spouse. The problem is a combative legal system that allows and even encourages the warfare to continue. We must replace the battling with neutral, family friendly mediation and conciliation.

Have we made progress over the past 12 years? Unquestionably.

Is there a long road still yet to go? Undoubtedly.

But with the help of all our supporters, and with a spiritual as well as a practical approach, we shall make even more progress for children and families in the future.

Thank you all for all the support you have given, and continue to give, to these noble efforts.

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Around the Country

Iowa Joint Custody/Access Laws Strengthened

It is now easier to get joint physical custody, more access/visitation enforcement, and stronger remedies in case of a move-away, as a result of a new law in Iowa. The new law also allows judges to impose cash bonds against parents with a history of access interference, and revokes the requirement of financial child support to age 22.

Gov. Branstad

The changes were passed by the state legislature, signed by Gov. Terry Branstad (R-IA), and took effect on July 1, 1997. Dick Woods of Iowa, who spearheaded the changes, said that the new law, known as House File 612,

1) Makes it easier to get joint physical custody (which Iowa calls joint physical care), which Iowa courts define as between 25 to 50 percent of time between the child and a parent on a year round basis.

Although Iowa has been considered to have a presumption for joint custody since 1982, the new law takes away language that Woods says Iowa courts had sometimes used against joint physical custody. Woods says the new provision makes it absolutely clear that joint legal and physical custody are both favored by the legislature.

2) Provides for more access/visitation enforcement, including enabling the court, as an alternative to contempt, to order exchange of the child at a neutral drop-off center. The court can also impose sanctions, such as requiring joint signatures on authorization forms for school or other activities the child may participate in, to enforce the joint legal custody that is routinely given in Iowa.

3) If a custodial or primary care parent moves out of state with the child, the new law says a move of 150 miles or more would be grounds for a substantial change of circumstances warranting a change in the access/visitation schedule, "to preserve the relationship with the child" including shared transportation costs.

The new law also provides that if there is a history of access/ visitation interference, the physical care parent can be required to post a cash bond to assure future compliance with the visitation order. The amount of the bond would be at the court's discretion.

"This cash bond provision is a huge milestone for our movement" said Woods.

Financial Child Support to Age 22 Repealed

Previously, Iowa had a provision for financial child support to age 22. This provision was removed from Iowa law in this new law, so that now, financial child support only goes to age 18, unless a child is in high school, in which case, child support can continue to age 19.

"Parents want to provide stepping stones for their children, including college," said Woods, "but this should be a matter between the parent and the child," said Woods.

Woods is credited with spearheading the original presumption for joint custody (joint physical care) that became law in Iowa in 1982, and this is the latest strengthening of that law.

Woods is president of Fathers for Equal Rights in Iowa, an affiliate of CRC of Nebraska/Iowa.

Divorce Education in Maryland

A new Maryland law authorizes judges to require divorcing couples to attend an educational seminar prior to the divorce when (financial) child support, custody or visitation are issues in the divorce action.

Glendening

"That would probably apply to most, if not all, separating parents," said Al Ellis, head of Maryland Families for Divorce Reform, who works with CRC, and who supported the bill. Parents need not attend the seminars together, Ellis noted.

The seminars will educate parents about the effects of divorce on their children's lives and discuss ways to minimize the disruption divorce causes.

The bill, sponsored by State Sen. John J. Hafer, was signed into law by Governor Parris Glendening, and will take effect October 1, 1997.

Risa Garon, director of the Children of Separation and Divorce Center, Columbia, Maryland, was the catalyst for the new law, which took several years of work to pass the Maryland legislature.

The law is part of Maryland Family Law Sec. 7-103.2.

False Memory Syndrome

The False Memory Syndrome Foundation sponsored a conference March 22-23, 1997, in Baltimore Maryland that focused on the use and misuse of generated memories from a person's earlier life. Harvey Walden, CRC Coordinator for Maryland, who attended the conference, said that "there was discussion of the apparent widespread misuse in child custody cases of information a person supposedly is induced to remember from his or her life up to 20 or 30 years ago."

FMSF was founded in 1992 by a group of accused families and several professionals from medical schools at the University of Pennsylvania, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. The families were trying to deal with the nightmare of being accused of abuse during the childhoods of their now adult children, and the legal ramifications of lawsuits brought by the children, said Walden.

For information contact Pamela Freyd, Ph.D., executive director, FMSF, 3401 Market Street, Suite 130, Philadelphia, PA, 19104.

CAPTA Revised to Provide Relief from False Allegations

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which has long required the reporting of all suspected child abuse, was amended by Congress in 1996 to "eliminate blanket immunity from prosecution for persons making knowingly false allegations of child abuse or neglect. Only good faith reports will be protected by immunity," said Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN), one of the bill's chief sponsors, in remarks on the Senate floor on November 10, 1996.

Coats

The amendments to CAPTA are resulting in more openness in the reporting of abuse and neglect cases, according to the following Associated Press story that appeared in newspapers around the country on February 1, 1997.

By Sarah Nordgren
Associated Press

CHICAGO - A 3-year old Chicago boy is hanged by his emotionally disturbed mother. In New York, a 6-year-old dies after being flung against a wall by her mother, who believes the girl is possessed by the devil.

Laws designed to offer privacy to children and families have been blamed for hiding how much abuse was allowed to happen in the first place. Now, several states have passed laws that have lifted the veil of secrecy that has kept the media and public in the dark about the 3 million reports of abuse and neglect cases a year nationwide.

"The changes are long overdue," said Doug Besharov, an expert in family policy at the American Enterprise Institute. "It's too easy for confidentiality to be used to protect agency mistakes and incompetent casework."

In Arizona and Idaho, lawmakers have been given access to abuse and neglect records to improve oversight. Colorado and Florida now make public abuse or neglect records in cases where a child dies in state care.

A proposal to change the laws in Illinois was sparked by cases such as the 1993 hanging of 3-year-old Joseph Wallace, which prompted an outcry over why the boy was returned to his emotionally disturbed mother.

The state's child welfare department was barred by law and policy from disclosing his mother's lengthy history with the department or the actions it had taken in the case.

Now under a proposed plan, if a person is charged with abusing a child in his care, the state welfare agency can release the child's name, the services the family received, or any previous claims of abuse in the family.

Even the mention of the accused abuser's name by certain public officials can trigger the release of case information.

"The system does better when exposed," said Jess McDonald, the state's child welfare director. "It says to people, if you haven't done the right thing in a case, you can't hide behind confidentiality."

Not everyone sees disclosure as a boon.

Chicago lawyer Diane Redleaf, who represents parents in abuse and neglect cases, is among those concerned about the new reforms—Illinois in particular.

"Anybody who's the subject of (an unsubstantiated) report can be subject to disclosure under that," Redleaf said.

Changes in the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Act (CAPTA) have moved states toward greater disclosure, said Howard Davidson, director of the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law.

"States had generally felt constrained by federal law from that kind of openness in records," Davidson said. "But after Elisa in New York City, the (government) began to say it was going to allow states to be flexible."

***(Editor's note:** In remarks on the Senate floor September 27, 1996, Sen. Coats said nearly 2 million of the 3 million cases of abuse and neglect reported each year are "unsubstantiated reports of child abuse and neglect that are filed wrongfully and in some cases maliciously.")*

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In the Courts

Jurisdiction Over Interference With Custody

A mother who fled with a child to another state, instead of returning him to his father in Virginia, cannot argue that Virginia lacked jurisdiction in regard to the custodial interference because the act of withholding the child occurred outside Virginia, the Virginia Court of Appeals has ruled. The mother shared joint legal and physical custody with the father. She failed to return the child to the father, after she had gone on a visit to Wisconsin with the child. Subsequently, the mother fled to Colorado, and later to California, where she was arrested. The mother argued that her conviction in Virginia for custodial interference was improper, because jurisdiction is determined by where the child is withheld from the custodial parent. The appeals court disagreed, saying the harm caused (depriving the father of custody) occurred within Virginia.

[Foster-Zahid v. Virginia, Va CtApp, No. 1937-95-4, 11/12/96]

Support For Incarcerated Children

A trial court could properly suspend a father's support obligation for the period during which his teenage sons were in the custody of the state Department of Youth Services, the Ohio Court of Appeals has ruled. The appeals court noted that the mother incurred expenses only in providing the boys with minimal necessities during their incarceration. The result might have been different if the mother had claimed that her fixed expenses, such as housing, had not changed during the boys' absence.

[Sigler v. Sigler, Ohio CtApp, No. 15624, 11/1/96]

Split Custody And Child Support

A court could properly order a divorced father to pay $788 a month for two children living with his ex-wife, and order the mother to pay $339 a month for one child living with the father, Florida's Fourth District Court of Appeals ruled. The appeals court rejected the father's argument that the amounts were arbitrary and unfair because they deviated from the child support guidelines. The guidelines contain no provisions explicitly relating to split custody situation, the appeals court said. However, the appeals court said, in the absence of legislation, courts should adopt a uniform method applicable to split custody.

[Simpson v. Simpson, Fla 4thDistCtApp, No. 95-2386, 10/9/96]

Burden Of Proof

The Indiana Court of Appeals ruled that the state, in prosecuting a criminal charge of non-support of a child, need not prove that the failure to pay was voluntary or purposeful. The appeals court ruled that the burden of proving inability to pay rests on the defendant. The defense of inability to pay does not prove that a defendant was guilty of knowingly or intentionally failing to pay support, although this defense may relieve the defendant from criminal liability.

[Blatchford v. Indiana, Ind CtApp, No. 53A01-9606-CR-215, 11/27/96)

Grandparent Visitation

Despite Connecticut's grandparent visitation law, grandparents have no right to seek visitation rights when their grandchildren's family is intact, the Connecticut Supreme Court has ruled. The court construed the statute as applying only in situations where the grandchildren's family has been disrupted, whether by the parents' de facto separation, a parent's death, or some similar situation.

[Castagno v. Wholean, Conn SupCt, 239 Conn. 336, 11/26/96]

Support By Non-Parent

A man who is not the father of the child in question can be forced to continue paying child support, because he earlier acknowledged paternity of an out-of-wedlock child, the Alabama Supreme Court has ruled. The court said the father chose to accept the responsibility of being the child's legal father, regardless of his doubts as to paternity. A state statute allows a man adjudicated to be a child's biological father to reopen the question of paternity, but the court said this law is not designed to relieve a man from a choice he made years earlier simply because he is now unwilling to pay support.

[Alabama ex rel. A.T. v. E.W., Ala SupCt, No. 1950631, 12/6/96]

The above cases are summarized from Family Law Reporter. They appear here by permission of the publisher, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.

Help Us Help You!

CRC needs equipment:

- ★computers
- ★typewriters
- ★photocopy machines
- ★other office equipment

CRC needs volunteers to:

- ★do filing
- ★answer the phone
- ★work with celebrities
- ★work on the internet
- ★advocacy
- ★information
- ★fund-raising
- ★what else would you like to do?

Contact the national office or the chapter nearest you to ask about their needs. Thank you.

Amicus Briefs

If your case is on appeal, and you would like CRC to consider writing an amicus curaie (Friend of the Court) brief, contact CRC. CRC cannot handle cases at the trial level, and we do not write the main appeal brief. An amicus brief is a supplemental brief, telling the court why this case is of significance not only to the parties in the case, but to other children and families as well. We generally need 30 to 60 days before the filing deadline. The writing of CRC amicus briefs is supervised by CRC General Counsel Michael L. Oddenino.

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Mediation and Other Services Helpful, Say Evaluators of 1988 Access Grants

The evaluators of the access demonstrations grants authorized by Congress under the 1988 Family Support Act conclude that mediation, either voluntary or mandated, is a valuable tool to assist parents in identifying their parental responsibilities, thus allowing them to focus their energies upon the needs of their children.

In their joint Report to Congress of July 1996, the Center for Policy Research and Policy Studies, Inc., list four significant findings in their evaluation of demonstration projects in Idaho, Massachusetts, Florida, and Arizona. Funded in 1990, these pilot sites employed mediation to resolve access disputes. The measurable outcomes that were anticipated included: decreasing the time required to resolve actual disputes; reducing unnecessary litigation; improving voluntary compliance of court-ordered access; and promoting the healthy adjustment of children in transitional family settings.

The conclusions are promising: "In Arizona 60 percent of the parents believed that telephone monitoring was an effective tool." "Forty percent of the parents in Idaho positively cited the educational and counseling sessions." "More than 50 percent of the fathers in Massachusetts felt on-site services were helpful." Approximately 60 percent of all parents rated the educational sessions as "helpful," while 45 percent rated counseling equally helpful.

The settlement rates for participating parents were in the range of 65 to 70 percent. Following mediated settlements, "the incidence of relitigation over access issues within a six-month time frame was quite low." The mediated settlements also reported better compliance with child support orders as compared with their counterparts which did not take part in the mediation program.

"Access is a problem for many parents and there is a need for remedial interventions. Many parents...reported the services they received to be helpful. There is clearly a need for mediation, counseling, education, and monitoring interventions," the report said.

The Center for Policy Research, and Policy Studies, Inc., both in Denver, Colorado, also evaluated the projects that were funded in the "second wave" of pilot projects in 1991, in Idaho, Iowa, and Indiana.

Counselling in Iowa Helped Fathers

Pearson

Fathers for Equal Rights, Des Moines, Iowa, headed by Dick Woods, ran the $300,000 access grant awarded to the state of Iowa. Fathers in Iowa were the only ones who took part in counseling interventions.

At the follow-up interviews, approximately 80 percent of the fathers who participated in counseling in Iowa reported that it had been helpful. Similarly, most fathers who pursued strategies recommended in Iowa, such as maintaining a journal to document visitation, communicating directly with the child's school, and retaining an attorney, reported these measures were helpful.

The 44-page evaluation of the grants was prepared by Jessica Pearson and Nancy Thoennes of the Center for Policy Research, and Robert Williams and David Price of Policy Studies, Inc., both of which are in Denver, CO. David Arnaudo, Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was the federal administrator of the grants.

Copies of this report may be obtained from the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Child Support Enforcement's Reference Center, 370 L'Enfant Promenade S.W., Washington, D.C. 20447, phone 202-401-9383.

(Congress has now appropriated $10 million a year to encourage access/visitation in all 50 states; see elsewhere in this issue).

CRC Guideline Available

Copies of the model child support guideline prepared by CRC that is based on a child having two parents are still available from the federal government.

This is the first time that the federal government has ever distributed a guideline that takes into account the direct expenditures on a child by the non-custodial parent.

To obtain a copy of the federal publication, phone (202) 401-9383, which is the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Child Support Reference Center, located at 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Washington, D.C. 20447. There is no charge for the publication, entitled "Child Support Guidelines: The Next Generation", as long as supplies last.

Copies of the guideline itself as published by the government are available from CRC for $5.00 for CRC members, and $10.00 for non-members, including shipping and handling.

If you would like to contact Don Bieniewicz, author of the guideline, for his assistance in getting this guideline adopted in the states, write him at 10004 Fairoaks Road, Vienna, VA 22181, contact him via email at DonBien@erols.com, or phone 703-255-0837 (evenings).

Change of Address

To keep newsletters and other materials coming, please notify CRC three weeks in advance of any address change.
Send old and new addresses to CRC,
220 "I" Street N.W., Suite 140,
Washington, DC 20002

Chapter News

Toys for Kids in New York

The Broome County Family Court Waiting Room in Binghamton (upstate New York) is routinely visited by many children in conjunction with their parents' litigation. It's been well known in the community that the waiting room is in poor physical condition and lacks amenities for young children, said Kim Boedecker-Frey, New York State CRC coordinator. So he suggested to the New York State Credit Union League Community Service Program that it share some of the proceeds from its annual toy drive for sick and injured children with the Broome County Court. The Credit Union League Board (CULB) approved the idea and recently donated hundreds of dollars worth of small tables and chairs, books and toys, including little cars and trucks, and toy chest. "All it took was a few phonecalls from New York State CRC," said Boedecker-Frey. "And some individuals on the Credit Union League Board were so impressed with the needs of these children that they have personally helped to decorate the Waiting Room walls with drawings for children."

California is Second Largest CRC Chapter

The second-largest CRC chapter is California, whose state coordinator is Patricia Gehlen, a grandmother and third grade teacher. Pat is very skillful at working with legislators and judges. The state president is Will Brown, a public affairs consultant. The chapter has a court watch, consisting of people who accompany members to court to observe their cases and other cases. Pat and Will both live in the state capital, as does Will, so this gives an advantage in monitoring the state legislature. CRC of California has contact points in various cities, and has listings in phone books under "fathers," "mothers," and "children," which generate many phone calls.

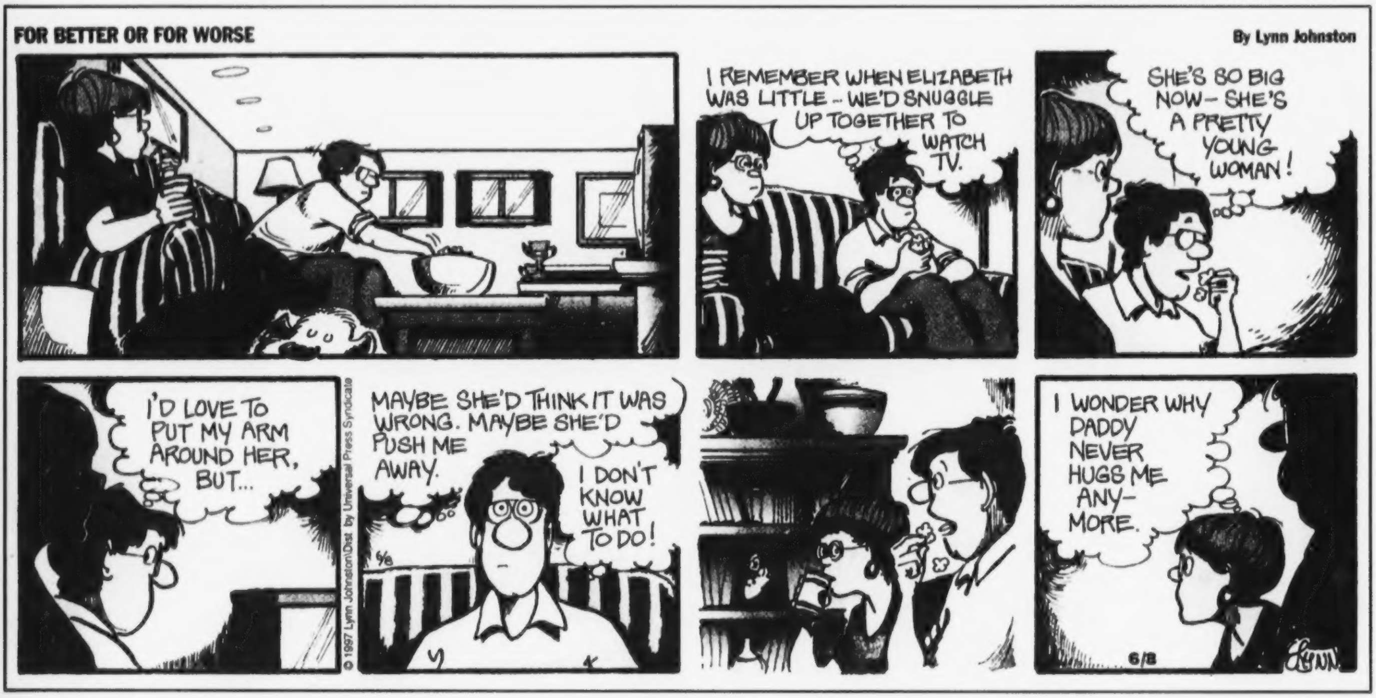
Michael E. Jones is the new CRC Coordinator for Pennsylvania. He works for a family owned company that runs several retail businesses, and is the father of two daughters, Kaitlin, 9, and Kelsey, 7, of whom he has joint physical and legal custody.

Jamaica J. Filgo is the new CRC coordinator for Washington State. Jamaica is married to a non-custodial parent of two sons, whom she and her husband have not seen for almost 2 1/2 years because of custodial interference. She is a singer and actress. She worked on behalf of Jim Kastama, a former CRC activist, who was elected to the Washington State legislature last Fall.

Nancy Kellogg is the new CRC coordinator in Wisconsin. She is a long-time CRC member and activist.

Frank E. Anderson, a former international president of Parents Without Partners, is the new CRC coordinator for Massachusetts. Anderson has helped guide PWP to a balanced stance to represent the rights of children and all parents.

This is the first time CRC has had chapters in Wisconsin and Washington State.


FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE
By Lynn Johnston
I REMEMBER WHEN ELIZABETH WAS LITTLE - WE'D SNUGGLE UP TOGETHER TO WATCH TV.
SHE'S SO BIG NOW - SHE'S A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN!
I'D LOVE TO PUT MY ARM AROUND HER, BUT...
© 1997 Lynn Johnston/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
MAYBE SHE'D THINK IT WAS WRONG. MAYBE SHE'D PUSH ME AWAY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
6/8
I WONDER WHY DADDY NEVER HUGS ME ANY-MORE.
6/8
LYNN

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Bills in Congress

We are including important bills and resolutions in Congress affecting families that have been introduced in the 105th Congress that convened in January 1997. A bill if passed into law requires a state or person to do something; a resolution if passed expresses the wishes of Congress, but does not require action. Unless the word "Resolution" appears below, we are referring only to bills. H. or H.R. refers to the House of Representatives, S. refers to the Senate. The phone number of the committee handling the bill is provided below; you may call to check on the status of legislation, or express your views. It is even more important to let your own Representative and Senator know your views. The capital switchboard, which can connect you with the offices of all members of Congress and committees, is (202) CA4-3121 (224-3121). This is a 24-hour switchboard that can provide you night and day with names, addresses, and direct phone numbers of all members of Congress. During normal weekday business hours, the switchboard can connect you with any Congressional office on Capitol Hill. To save on expenses, you can contact the Congressmembers' local branch office in your district.

Adoption

H.R. 867, introduced by Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI), and Rep. Barbara Kennelly (D-CT), to promote the adoption of children in foster care. The bill, which passed the House of Representatives in March 1997, and is now in the Senate, would expedite the adoption of children in foster care from 18 months to 12 months.

Camp

At the request of custody reform advocates, the bill provides that kinship care can be an alternative to adoption for children who have been in foster care. CRC is working to obtain an amendment in the Senate version to also allow kinship care before a child is placed into foster care in the first place.

Kennelly

"If kinship care is acceptable as an alternative to adoption after a child has languished in foster care, why not consider kinship care before a child ever gets into foster care," said Anna Stinchcomb, a summer 1997 CRC legislative intern, who worked on the bill.

Other adoption bills provide funds to expedite adoption, but do not have any provisions for kinship care. CRC thus prefers **H.R. 867**. The bills are being handled by the Senate Finance Committee, phone 202-224-4515.

If you favor kinship care, write the following letter to your Representative or Senator, and send a copy to CRC.

Write to Congress!

Write to House members at:

Representative —
(name of your Representative)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Write to Senators at:

Senator — (name of your Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear —

Please amend **H.R. 867** (the adoption bill) to allow kinship care as an alternative to foster care. The bill already provides kinship care as an alternative to adoption, and if that is acceptable, why not also provide for kinship care as an alternative to foster care?

Where there are fit and willing relatives who can take care of the child, the relatives should be allowed to keep the child in the family network, by voluntarily caring for the child.

Please endorse kinship care as an alternative to foster care.

For information, contact the Children's Rights Council, 220 I Street N.E., Washington, D.C.

Thank you.

Name
Address
Date

Directory of Resources

Now available from CRC–A complete listing of support groups and other organizations that can help people in your state. The list for each state is $5.00 fo rmembers and $10.00 for non-members. The lists are part of CRC's International Parenting Directory.

Alternatively, order the **entire** International Parenting Directory, listing 1,200 groups in the U.S. and abroad. $12.00 for members and $17.00 for non-members.

Ask for either hard-copy or disk format. The hard-copy is updated yearly; disks are updated frequently.

All credit card orders have a $10.00 minimum.

FAMILY FACTS

Photocopy and distribute the "Family Facts" on the next page! Use as handouts when visiting the Legislature, disseminating information to the courts or the media, or as a resource for testimony and Letters to the Editor. "Family Facts" is a regular feature of this newsletter. Send us your verified facts (with actual copies, sources and dates) to "Family Facts," CRC.

Family Facts

The Long-Term Effects of Divorce on Children

Childhoods spent in unhappy solitude, adolescence roiled by drug and alcohol abuse, adulthood compromised–these are the stark legacies for children of divorce, according to a study released in June 1997.

A full-quarter century after their parents' divorce, children remain emotionally troubled, said Judith Wallerstein, Ph.D., co-author of the report.

Haunted by lingering memories of the divorce and hurtful aftermath, the children shy away from intimacy, are mistrustful of marriage, and fear starting families of their own.

Half of those studied got deeply involved with drugs and alcohol. One third ended their education with high school.

While others continued their education and entered the working world, they did not match their parents' earning levels.

"Our jury is no longer out," Ms. Wallerstein wrote. "The children who were rendered mute by the system have returned to give us their verdict."

"Unlike the adult experience, the child's suffering does not reach its peak at the breakup and then level off," the study said. "On the contrary. Divorce is a cumulative experience for the child. Its impact increases over time.

"There was no transition, no cushioning of the blow. The children's loneliness, their sense that no one was there to take care of them, was overwhelming ...such are the core memories of these adults, 25 years later."

(The study, by Wallerstein and Julia Lewis, a psychology professor at San Francisco State University, is based on 26 young people–children from middle to upper-income families in Marin County, California, who were 2 to 6 years old when their parents broke up. They are now from 27 to 32 years old. Wallerstein heads the Center for Families in Transition, Corte Madera California.)

(Note: *The study corroborates earlier findings about the long-time effects of divorce from other researchers, including John Guidubaldi, Ph.D., Kent State and John Carroll Universities, Ohio; and Sanford Braver, Arizona State University.)*

Why the Violence?

The rise in adolescent violence has been attributed to many things. However, a study reveals that the erosion of family life is one of the primary causes of teen violence, according to a study by researchers at Columbia University and St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York City.

Adolescent violence flows from many sources, the authors of the study observe. But their analysis lays particular emphasis on "the breakdown of social controls" in the communities where many young adults live. Such social controls depend upon the well-being of "family, community, schools, and religious and social organizations. Increases in crime and violence are signals that these groups are failing to hold.

"Traditionally," the researchers point out, "the family is the social institution that constrains adolescents within the bounds of community values. Changes in social structures–the entry of large numbers of mothers into the work force, the rise in single-parent households, and the dispersal of the extended family–have been especially hard on adolescents. Single-parent households and households where both parents are employed tend to have less time and patience, consistency, and flexibility in rearing children."

When the family fails, the researchers point out, adolescents are often left with problems they cannot handle by themselves. Consequently, many troubled adolescents "seek refuge in family-like peer groups. When those peer groups are delinquent gangs, teens find not only the emotional support they need, but additional reinforcements of antisocial behavior."

Source: Alwyn T. Cohall et al., "Teen Violence: The Reasons Why," Contemporary Pediatrics, October 1991, pp. 55-77.

From Volume 12, Number 3, Summer 1997, *Speak Out for Children*, newsletter of the
Children's Rights Council, 220 "I" Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002
phone (202) 547-6227

Children's Rights Council®

(CRC)
Number 1513
In the National Combined Federal Campaign

CHILDREN'S
CHARITIES
OF AMERICA

We are a member of the Children's Charities of America (CCA). Look for CRC's listing in the index of the CFC Brochure, then turn to the page given for CCA's members. We are number 1513.

YOU MUST DESIGNATE 1513 FOR CRC TO RECEIVE FUNDS.

The Children's Rights Council works to assure that children of separation and divorce obtain as much emotional and financial support as children of intact marriages.

Some of CRC's accomplishments:

- Publicized findings that children with two parents generally have fewer problems with drugs and crime than children with only one parent. Proposed changes in attitudes and laws in order to encourage a child's bonding to two parents and extended family.

- Provided the necessary data that led Congress to provide funds for the first time in history to improve access (visitation) between children and their non-custodial parents.

- Promoted the school based "Banana Splits" program to help children of separation and divorce channel the transition in their lives into stronger academic achievement.

- Award-winner for assisting a county outside Washington, D.C., (Prince George's, MD) in hiring staff to improve bonding between children and their non-custodial parents.

- Won a court case in Ohio upholding a joint custody (shared parenting) agreement approved in Florida between two parents that one of the parents sought to repudiate when the parents moved to Ohio.

- Won a court case in New Jersey upholding a law that allows a judge to give custody to Parent B if Parent A seeks to permanently remove the child to another state without sufficient reason.

- Provided assistance to parents and professionals on how to get through the divorce process in the most peaceful, problem-free way, so as to take the stress out of divorce. Money that would be spent on battling between parents is available for the children.

CRC only receives funds that you actually designate!

DESIGNATE NUMBER 1513 IN THE COMBINED FEDERAL CANPAIGN.

The Children's Rights Council is a national non-profit organization at 220 I St., NE #140, Washington, D.C. 20002-4362. Phone: 202/547-6227 FAX: 202/546-4272. To obtain a copy of our Catalog of Resources, Directory of Parenting Organizations, Affiliation Book, Annual Report, or latest audit, write or call CRC. Thank you.

Please reproduce this flyer and distribute it anywhere in the U.S. to federal offices, U.S. Post Offices, and military bases for the October nationwide federal charity campaign.

All artwork trademarked or trademark pending, CRC

COPY, DISTRIBUTE, AND POST IN FEDERAL OFFICES, POST OFFICES, MILITARY BASES

Children's Rights Council®

IN UNITED WAY, WORKPLACE AND CORPORATE CAMPAIGNS CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS COUNCIL (CRC)

CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy. We favor family formation and family preservation, but if families break up, or are never formed, we work to assure a child the frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family the child would normally have during marriage. Our motto is "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

For the child's benefit, CRC favors parenting education before marriage, during marriage, and in the event of separation. We work to demilitarize divorce between parents who are involved in marital disputes, substituting mediation for the adversarial process, and providing for fair financial child support. We also favor school-based programs for children at risk.

There are several ways you can contribute to the Children's Rights Council

- through the Combined Federal Campaign if you work for the federal government at any federal office, post office, or military base. CRC is listed as Number 1513 (the same number as last year) in the Children's Charities of America listing;
- in the Washington, D.C. and San Francisco Bay Area United Way campaigns, where we are also listed as Number 1513

- if you wish to contribute to CRC through a United Way where we are not listed, please ask your employer if you can designate (write in) the Children's Rights Council
- in corporate campaigns, including AARP, CNA Insurance, Lotus Development Corp., KPMG
- if you wish to contribute directly to CRC, write to CRC, 220 "I" Street N.E., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002

Contributions accepted on Visa, MC, or Discovery credit cards.

Visit the Children's Rights Council on the Website: http://www.vix.com/crc

All contributions are tax-deductible

CHILDREN FIRST! **THANK YOU!**

To join, or for more information, call (202) 547-6227

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COPY, DISTRIBUTE, AND POST FOR UNITED WAY, WORKPLACE AND CORPORATE CAMPAIGNS

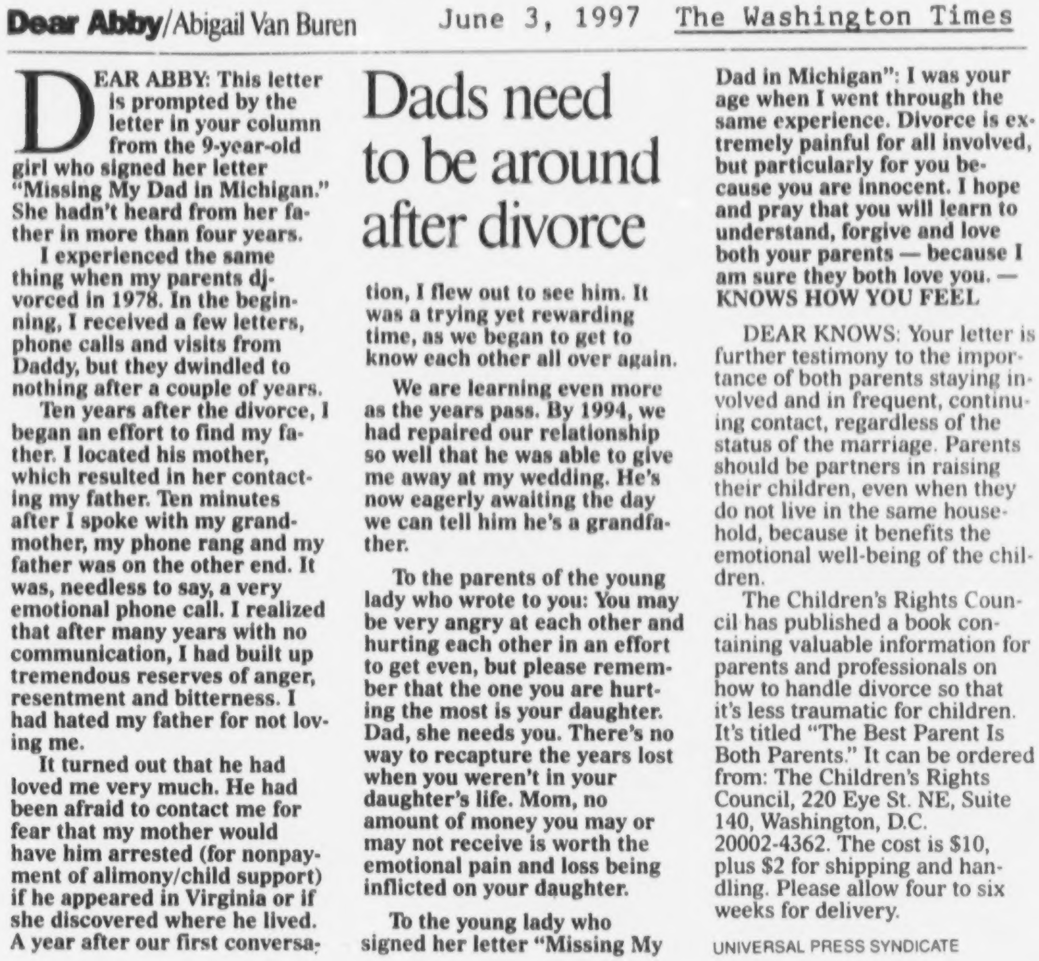
Inside CRC

Media Notes

CRC receives phone calls from the media on a regular basis. This has resulted in recent mention of CRC and our views in numerous media outlets, such as The Boston Globe; The Detroit Free Press; Newsday; Washington, D.C. NBC affiliate Channel 4 (where David Levy discussed the Wallerstein study on the effects of divorce on children); The Los Angeles Daily Record (and its sister law journals) that carried a story on CRC General Counsel Michael L. Oddenino).

In January, 1997, Ann Landers printed a letter in her nationwide column by CRC member Paul LeBon praising CRC, resulting in hundreds of phone calls for information to the CRC national office and to CRC chapters.

In June, 1997, Dear Abby wrote a nationwide column in which she urged her readers to order the CRC Book "The Best Parent is Both Parents," which resulted in more than 1,200 orders for the book. The column is reproduced below.



Dear Abby/Abigail Van Buren June 3, 1997 The Washington Times

Dads need to be around after divorce

DEAR ABBY: This letter is prompted by the letter in your column from the 9-year-old girl who signed her letter "Missing My Dad in Michigan." She hadn't heard from her father in more than four years.

I experienced the same thing when my parents divorced in 1978. In the beginning, I received a few letters, phone calls and visits from Daddy, but they dwindled to nothing after a couple of years.

Ten years after the divorce, I began an effort to find my father. I located his mother, which resulted in her contacting my father. Ten minutes after I spoke with my grandmother, my phone rang and my father was on the other end. It was, needless to say, a very emotional phone call. I realized that after many years with no communication, I had built up tremendous reserves of anger, resentment and bitterness. I had hated my father for not loving me.

It turned out that he had loved me very much. He had been afraid to contact me for fear that my mother would have him arrested (for nonpayment of alimony/child support) if he appeared in Virginia or if she discovered where he lived. A year after our first conversation, I flew out to see him. It was a trying yet rewarding time, as we began to get to know each other all over again.

We are learning even more as the years pass. By 1994, we had repaired our relationship so well that he was able to give me away at my wedding. He's now eagerly awaiting the day we can tell him he's a grandfather.

To the parents of the young lady who wrote to you: You may be very angry at each other and hurting each other in an effort to get even, but please remember that the one you are hurting the most is your daughter. Dad, she needs you. There's no way to recapture the years lost when you weren't in your daughter's life. Mom, no amount of money you may or may not receive is worth the emotional pain and loss being inflicted on your daughter.

To the young lady who signed her letter "Missing My Dad in Michigan": I was your age when I went through the same experience. Divorce is extremely painful for all involved, but particularly for you because you are innocent. I hope and pray that you will learn to understand, forgive and love both your parents — because I am sure they both love you. — KNOWS HOW YOU FEEL

DEAR KNOWS: Your letter is further testimony to the importance of both parents staying involved and in frequent, continuing contact, regardless of the status of the marriage. Parents should be partners in raising their children, even when they do not live in the same household, because it benefits the emotional well-being of the children.

The Children's Rights Council has published a book containing valuable information for parents and professionals on how to handle divorce so that it's less traumatic for children. It's titled "The Best Parent Is Both Parents." It can be ordered from: The Children's Rights Council, 220 Eye St. NE, Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002-4362. The cost is $10, plus $2 for shipping and handling. Please allow four to six weeks for delivery.

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Donors are Appreciated

CRC thanks everyone who contributes to CRC in the charity drive that takes place in all federal government offices every Fall. CRC is listed as number 1513 in the Children's Charities of America listing, which is part of the Independent Charities of America. We also thank those who contribute to CRC in the Washington, D.C., and San Francisco (Bay Area) United Way campaigns.

We also thank those who contribute to CRC through their United Way in some other part of the country, where we are not listed, but where employers may sometimes allow employees to designate CRC.

CRC depends on volunteer help and contributions for its existence.

If you wish to make your tax-deductible contribution directly to CRC, send it to CRC, 220 I Street, Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20002.

CRC Ranks Top 10 States

CRC released its 3rd annual report on "The 10 Best States to Raise Children" July 24, 1997, as part of the National Parents' Day Coalition's press conference and reception on Capitol Hill.

CRC received major publicity through the AP and other national media. The report was covered by hundreds of newspapers and radio stations around the country.

The Top 10 States were 1) North Dakota 2) Vermont 3) Minnesota 4) New Hampshire 5) Iowa 6) Utah 7) Wisconsin 8) Nebraska 9) New Jersey 10) Massachusetts.

Criteria included highest high school graduation rate, lowest number of single parents, lowest number of teenage pregnancies, and lowest number of unwed mothers. CRC interns researched and correlated the data, and handled many of the press calls. A copy of the full report is available from CRC for $5.

CRC on Internet

Interest in CRC on the Internet is growing. Bruce Kaskubar, CRC coordinator in Minnesota has placed CRC on the Internet Worldwide Web. For those of you with a browser, the home page's URL is http://www.vix.com/crc/ Read about CRC's conference and available resources on the home page.

Intellectual Property Protection

Charlie Ruggiero, who obtained trademark protection for the name and logo "Children's Rights Council" and the name and logo for our newsletter "Speak Out for Children" is a specialist in trademark, patent, copyright, and licensing law. He is a partner in the law firm of Ohlandt, Greeley and Ruggiero, 1 Landmark Square, Suite 903, Stamford, CT 06901, telephone (203) 327-6067.

New CRC Board Members

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, two successful business executives have accepted CRC's invitation to become board members of CRC.

They are Paul R. Locigno and Susette P. Watt. Here is more information about them.

Paul R. Locigno, president and founder of Rollins International, Ltd., in Virginia, is a veteran specialist in international business development for Asia. He was previously a founder and senior principal of Capitoline International Group, Ltd., where he established and managed its Asian operation's headquarters in Taipei, Taiwan.

Previously, as the special representative of the chairman of Hill and Knowlton Public Affairs Worldwide, Locigno directed their 17 office Asia-Pacific operation.

Locigno was appointed by President Reagan as Commissioner of the National Commission for Employment Policy, was a member of the President's Export Council, and has served on numerous other committees and commissions.

Locigno has held membership in the AFL-CIO Defense Committee, the U.S. Department of Labor Trade Negotiation Steering Committee, the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped, and the American League for Exports and Security Assistance.

He has served as a political advisor to numerous federal, state, and local candidates.

Locigno's son Paul, Jr., born in the U.S., was taken by his mother to Japan, and Paul Sr. was awarded custody by a U.S. court in the 1970's, but could not get Japanese courts to recognize the U.S. custody decree, or even to award him access (visitation). When his son turned 20, the 'age of reason' in Japan, he chose to move to the U.S. to live with his dad.

Susette P. Watt, is president of Angle, Inc., a defense contracting firm involved in engineering and software development in northern Virginia.

As a founder of the company, Susette understands you have to make the best of the few resources available. "It's not money that creates something from nothing; it's people who are willing to commit, focus, and create a path which can take us to the next level."

Susette hopes to assist in the growth of CRC in refining its vision to allow the organization to serve the greatest number of people. "Our issues are not gender based. The goal is to allow our children to have access to both parents without interference and manipulation. I am not a crusader, but I have seen what happens when the system breaks down. Our kids get caught in the middle. There are bad lawyers and others who support 'the divorce industry' that feed off the ignorance of their clients. It's going to be an uphill battle but we can protect our children by understanding how the system works and using the resources available to ensure compliance with the intent of the law."

Susette has two children, Suzanne, 16, and Emily, 6. Visitation and custody continue to be a problem.

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Or contact CRC, and we can suggest an accountant or tax advisor to assist you.

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Join CRC, then ask for a copy of the 100-page CRC booklet that explains everything you need to know about affiliation. The cost of the booklet is $15.00.

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Children's Rights Council
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for parents and professionals

Leslee Newman, an attorney in California who has expertise in move-away issues, will give a free 15 to 30 minute consultation to CRC members on move-away issues. Phone Leslee Newman at (714)282-1515

—*BOOK REVIEWS*—

Ashes to Ashes...Families to Dust

False Accusations of Child Abuse: A Roadmap for Survivors

by Dean Tong

260 pages, 1996, $15.95, FamRights Press Publishing

Real child abuse is a taboo and must be stopped, says Tong in this carefully written book, but the cure has compounded the problem.

Because federal and state laws mandate "uneducated and untrained" professionals to report abuse, invite and entertain anonymous hotline callers who are protected by 11th amendment immunity, define child abuse vaguely, and make no provisions to punish false accusers, Tong says this is why false allegations of child abuse have mushroomed to numbers of unimaginable proportions.

In 1995, he says, there were 3,200,000 reports of alleged child abuse and neglect in the U.S. Of those, only 16% incorporated sex abuse complaints. Of the 3,200,000, 75% were deemed unfounded by investigative authorities. Ironically, he states, in 1995, 6,500,000 children had access to only one parent, often due to false child abuse charges.

In the book, Tong tracks what happened to four families due to false allegations made in the context of custody battles. The ways in which children are put in the middle of these false abuse battles is carefully analyzed, leaving little doubt about the damage done to children by false allegations.

Tong favors Megan's Law, which requires the registry in communities of proven sex offenders, but argues that there is no protection against false allegations.

He provides information on how to better distinguish between true and false allegations, and lists resources and referrals, including an attorney referral list.

There is also a chapter by Kenneth Pangborn, a trial consultant based in Florida, who provides valuable information on how the court system works.

People who are innocent of accusations of abuse are often confused as to how to fight back. This book tells them how.

(Note: Since the book was written, Congress has modified federal law, so as to allow states to remove absolute immunity for those who falsely report and investigate child abuse allegations).

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Conducting Child Custody Evaluations: A Comprehensive Guide

by Philip Michael Stahl

260 pages, 1994, Sage Publications, $21.00

A CRC member who was totally unfamiliar with the custody evaluation process says he wishes he had this book two years ago when his child was being evaluated.

His comment prompted CRC to re-visit this 1994 book. We found that although the book is designed to acquaint professional custody evaluators with information on how to properly conduct evaluations, parents who read the book will get an idea of what an evaluator is looking for and what kind on information the evaluator should be given to expedite the process.

The evaluator presents the complexities of family dynamics to the judge in an understandable way to assist the judge in making a decision regarding the children and their needs.

There are chapters on Many Possible Roles of the Mental Health Experts, Fundamental Questions in Most Custody Evaluations, Developmental Perspectives for Children, Sharing the Results of the Evaluation, An Evaluation Report, and Complex Issues (Violence and Abuse, Mental Illness, Relocation).

A useful series of appendices contain explanations of psychological tests, and ethical standards for evaluators.

Stahl, an active member of the AFCC (the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts), spoke at CRC's 1995 conference.

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___**CR-9708** The Economic Impact of Divorce On Fathers and Mothers Sanford Braver, Ph.D., Researcher

___**CR-9609** What's Next in Parenting Education - Elizabeth Hickey, Dir. Mediation and Divorce Center in Utah

___**CR-9710** The New Access / Visitation Grants for All 50 States to Share In. How Many Grants Have Been Awarded? What Can Groups Do Now? Grant Application Suggestions. David Gray Ross, Director of the Federal Child Support Office, Laurie Casey, CRC Senior Policy Analyst and others

___**CR-9711** The Positive Effect of Father Presence on Children's Educational Development - Nicholas Zill Ph.D. and Christine Nord of Westat Inc. Moderator: Jim Cook, President Joint Custody Assn

___**CR-9712** Financial Management of a Chapter, IRS 501 (c) (3) Considerations, How to Raise Funds on Minimum Budget CRC Staff

___**CR-9713** Custody Litigation: How to Keep Your Children Out of the Middle of Custody Battles - Gerald Solomon, Esq

___**CR-9714** Deciding What's Best For The Children - Jayne Major Parenting Ed., Pam Stettner, Esq. and Barbara Wagner Custody Evaluator

___**CR-9715** How To Have A Win-win Situation in Court - Several Judges Moderator: Michael L. Oddenino, Esq., CRC Counsel

___**CR-9716** The Rediscovery of Parenting in America - Teresa Kaiser, Esq. Dir. of MO Child Support Office and Access / Visitation implementation

___**CR-9717** Guilt and Shame - The Difference for Parents. Nancy Heleno Obetz - How Joint Custody Reduces the Divorce Rate - Rick Kuhn and others

___**CR-9718** Canadian Efforts For Balances of Children and Families - Anne Cools, Canadian Senator

___**CR-9719** National Trends in Family Law Legislation and How to Affect Them - Ron Henry, Esq., Washington DC

___**CR-9720** Healthy Things You Can Do For Your Children and Yourself Through Chiropractic Care - Gary Santora, D.C.

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Strengthening Families
Through Education

Assisting Children of
Unwed Parents,
Separation and Divorce

SPEAK OUT FOR CHILDREN®

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Children's Rights Council, Inc.
300 "I" Street N.E., Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002-4389 Phone (202)547-6227

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First $10 Million in Access Grants Awarded

All 50 states and four jurisdictions (District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands) received their share of the first $10 million in access/visitation grants disbursed by the federal government before October 1, 1997.

The following is an analysis of what activities states plan to fund with that money (it should be noted that most states plan to fund multiple activities):

◆ Voluntary Mediation - 37 states and jurisdictions

◆ Mandatory Mediation - 31 states and jurisdictions

◆ Counseling - 24 states and jurisdictions

◆ Education - 33 states and jurisdictions

◆ Development of Parenting Plans - 32 states and jurisdictions

◆ Visitation Enforcement (unspecified) - 12 states and jurisdictions

◆ Monitored Visitation - 16 states and jurisdictions

◆ Supervised Visitation - 22 states and jurisdictions

◆ Neutral Drop-Off and Pick-Up - 17 states and jurisdictions

◆ Development of Guidelines for visitation and Alternative Custody Arrangements - 16 states and jurisdictions

Some interesting projects include: wide-ranging court reform (California, Oregon and Michigan); provision of services in a Head-Start setting (Georgia and Mississippi); provision of services in comprehensive Responsible Fatherhood Project settings (Maryland); hotline (Guam); parenting education for unwed parents participating with in-hospital paternity projects (Massachusetts); statewide registration for visitation (Oklahoma); and extended after work and weekend hours for supervised visitation (Rhode Island).

Many states are having competition for local projects (Georgia and Ohio); or are allocating funds by local areas (Arizona and Indiana). Some states are holding local forums and task forces to determine actual use of funds (Alabama, Iowa, Montana, and South Dakota).

The above data was provided by David Arnaudo, the federal administrator of the access/visitation grants, federal Office of Child Support Enforcement.

"These represent a wide variety of programs," said Arnaudo, who works for federal Child Support Director David Gray Ross. "That is, the states are developing new models, and trying projects close to the communities they serve. We hope for positive results for children and non-custodial parents."

For further information, Arnaudo may be reached at the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, phone (202) 401-5364.

Continued on page 3

CRC HAS MOVED—but only next door!
We are now at 300 "I" Street N.E., Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002. Please write to us at our new address. Our phone, fax, and Internet addresses remain the same. The move was necessary because our landlord (who owns both buildings) wanted to accommodate the needs of various tenants.

Stop Congressional Anti-Joint Custody Resolution 182—See page 5

"Speak Out for Children" is published by the Children's Rights Council, Inc. Editor: David L. Levy. Contributors to this Issue: David Dinn; Bob Haber, Don Bieniewicz, Harvey Walden, college student interns Heather Burgess, University of Tennessee; Tricia Fong, University of California; Jill Hollandsworth, a graduate of the University of Wyoming, and Jennifer McKibben, University of Washington. Newsletter layout by Kathleen L. Ballard

CRC is a member (Number 1513) of

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America

About CRC

The Children's Rights Council (CRC) is a nation-wide, non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) children's rights organization based in Washington, D.C.

CRC works to strengthen families through education and advocacy. We favor family formation and family preservation, but if families break up, or are never formed, we work to assure a child the frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family the child would normally have during a marriage. Our motto is "The Best Parent is Both Parents."

For the child's benefit, CRC favors parenting education before marriage, during marriage, and for parents who are unwed or separated. We work to demilitarize divorce between parents who are involved in marital disputes, substituting conciliation and mediation for the adversarial process, and providing for emotional and financial child support. We work to strengthen fragile families of children whose parents are unwed. We also favor school-based programs for children at risk.

Formed in 1985 by concerned parents who have more than 40 years collective experience in custody reform and early childhood education, CRC has chapters in 32 states and three national affiliate organizations: Mothers Without Custody (MW/OC), Parents Without Partners (PWP), and the Stepfamily Association of America (SAA).

Prominent professionals in the fields of religion, law, social work, psychology, child care, education, business, and government comprise our Advisory Panel.

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Access Grants

Continued from page 1

California Awarded $1 Million

Each state received at least $50,000 for the above grants, with the average grant totaling about $190,000. California was the largest recipient, receiving more than $1 million. The disbursements were made under a formula based in part on the number of single-parent households in the state.

The grants are provided under a provision of the 1996 Welfare Reform law "to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents access to and visitation of their children by means of activities including mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pick-up) and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements."

Each state and jurisdiction received a minimum of $50,000 prior to October 1, 1997, and will receive a minimum of $50,00 the second year. For the third and subsequent years, grants are expected to be at least $100,000 for each state. Several CRC chapters have applied for portions of the first round of grants. Those chapters are using the name "Family Support Network," a name CRC is promoting to identify the services CRC chapters and others wish to provide to help children and families. The Virginia Fatherhood Initiative (VFI), headed by Michael and Cindy Ewing, received a grant from the state of Virginia to establish the "Virginia Children's Access Program."

VFI is working with CRC.

Second Year Grants Coming Soon

Another $10 million in funds for the second year of access grants are expected to be in March, 1998. Contact state officials now! Ask CRC for names of those officials.

Letters to the Editor

Hollandsworth, Barry, and Levy

Editor:

I wanted to tell everyone how amazing it is to be involved with an organization that works on so many different levels at one time, including advocacy, education, and individual counseling. Voicing an opinion on federal legislation is a powerful experience. Often, organizations or businesses get interns and use them for faxing, photocopying, and stuffing envelopes. CRC is different and allows an individual to develop a multitude of professional skills and abilities.

Highlights from my internship include exciting experiences of the 11th national conference, testifying before the D.C. City Council, meeting Congressmembers, and talking with D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, who was instrumental in passage of the presumption for joint custody that became law in D.C. in 1996.

Progress on issues affecting the lives of millions of people is often slow; but through an organization like CRC, I feel we are united to a common cause.

Sincerely,

Jill Hollandsworth
CRC Intern, Fall, 1997

Custody Terms Criticized

Copy Editor, the magazine read by editors who decide how language is handled in newspapers and magazines, received a complaint about the use of the words absent parent and visitation in the print media.

Copy Editor consulted several individuals and groups, including CRC, whose views were carried in the Copy Editor, June/July 1996 issue. CRC was quoted as stating that the term absent parent dates to the 1935 Social Security Act. "In those days, when welfare was first set up, Social Security was for survivors of the deceased—fathers who were lost at sea or in mine disasters. Now 60 years later the main problem is divorce, and we're still using the same antiquated terms to describe parents who are not absent, but merely divorced," the article quoted CRC President David L. Levy

The article pointed out that the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement only uses the term absent parent in a publication referring to parents whose whereabouts are unknown. Otherwise, the office refers to noncustodial parents.

Copy Editor also carried criticism of the term visitation and deadbeat. Copy Editor is located at 149 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1207, New York, NY 10010, phone 212-995-0112, e-mail marybeth@copyeditor.com; world wide web http://www.copyeditor.com

Leslee Newman,
an attorney in California who has expertise in move-away issues,
will give a free 15 to 30 minute consultation to
CRC members on move-away issues.
Phone Leslee Newman at (714)282-1515

Levy

The CRC View

by David L. Levy

I hadn't even realized that Arkansas, the land of Bill Clinton, had a Republican governor until I received the invitation to speak at the first Arkansas Governor's Conference on Families, November 1, 1997.

But there he was—Mike Huckabee, 43, the father of three children, who gave one of the best speeches (without notes) on family issues I have ever heard from a governor.

Huckabee said the state's ability to meet strong infrastructure needs in education, highways, and the judicial system hinges on the ability to build stronger families.

Huckabee explained his focus on social issues by saying there is no greater issue than promoting and preserving families. Two new inmates add $26,000 to the taxpayer's prison bill each day when they enter the Arkansas prison system.

The governor linked strong families to less crime and a greater ability by the state to spend its money on such things as college scholarships.

"We cannot separate the direction of our government from the direction of our families and the costs thereof," Huckabee said.

The conference attracted nearly 2,000 people to Harding University in Searcy, about 50 miles north of Little Rock.

Other speakers included Wade Horn, director of the National Fatherhood Initiative; Star Parker, a former welfare mom who now publishes her own magazine in Los Angeles; and Michael Medved, the film critic and observer of American culture, who spoke of the assault on innocence on children by the media.

Medved said that although it was helpful for parents to distinguish between good and bad TV programs, the better approach would be to turn off the TV, because of the constant bombardment of messages that children receive. He said that 58 percent of children have television sets in their bedrooms."If you want to ensure that you have no influence over what your kids watch, if you want to make sure that your family flies apart, put a TV in your kid's room," Medved said. He urged adults to talk more with their children, and participate in activities with them.

In my talk, I pointed out the federally funded researcher Sanford Braver, Ph.D., Arizona State University, has found that more fathers feel "pushed away and shoved away, rather than walk away" from a marriage, and are thus *unable to be the kind of parents we would like them to be.*

Huckabee, though never divorced, is aware of the problems. Although he has been governor only since July 15, 1996 (when former Governor Jim Guy Tucker was indicted on two felony counts growing out of the Watergate inquiry), Huckabee said he wanted a conference that would produce not just good conversation, but public policy changes.

Huckabee

Indeed, Arkansas took the lead by passing a law in 1996 providing that any person, official, or institution willfully making a false allegation of child abuse shall be guilty of the highest misdemeanor possible for the first offense, and a felony for second offense. The new law amends Arkansas' Code Section 12-12-504.

As a result of this law deterring false allegations of abuse, Arkansas will be better able to deal with real abuse of children.

Arkansas is making headway for children and families!

Updated Parenting Directory Available

The new update of CRC's International Parenting Directory is now available. Updated as of January, 1998, this 7th edition of the directory contains information on more than 1,200 groups and individuals across the country and abroad working in areas such as custody, access/visitation, and prevention of parental kidnapping. The Directory, an invaluable networking tool, is available in hardcopy or disc for $12 for CRC members, and $15 for non-members. CRC thanks Paul Robinson and Ed Mudrak for their hard work in updating this Directory. The hardcopy is updated once a year; the disc is updated frequently. Order from CRC and specify which version you want—hardcopy or disc.

George Doppler, a longterm advocate for custody reform, died November 5, 1996, of cancer at his home in Broomall, Pennsylvania. He was 70. In the 1970's, George was one of the first individuals to develop and distribute a directory of organizations, to help other people network. He was an early pioneer in the movement to make custody laws fairer, and he encouraged many people in various parts of the country to work on behalf of custody reform. He is survived by his second wife of 15 years, Fern, four children and eight grandchildren.

Fred Tubbs, the first CRC coordinator in Vermont in the early 1990's, died in August, 1997, at age 44. He took his own life. Fred assisted people throughout the country on efforts to make financial child support guidelines fairer, and sought to reform Vermont's custody laws. A physicist who built his own house in Montpelier, and who grew strawberries for several years at his "Tubbs' Strawberry Farm," he also volunteered as a mentor for children in Vermont schools. He was an unwed father who closed his farm, and followed his daughter's mother when she moved across the state. He leaves a daughter, Erin, age 10, his parents, who live in upstate New York, and three brothers and sisters.

Congress Considering Effort to Gut State Joint Custody Law

The states are urged to gut joint custody laws, install the "primary caretaker" rule, and give one parent veto power over joint custody, under a resolution introduced in Congress on November 30, 1997.

"You would think that after all the data about children generally doing better when they have two parents in their lives, Congress would be cautious about trying to interfere with that right. But some in Congress are not so cautious," said CRC President David L. Levy.

The resolution, introduced by Rep. Connie Morella (R-MD) states in full:

H. Con. Res. 182. Expresses the sense of the Congress that for purposes of determining child custody, it is in the best interest of children to have a presumption that children should have their main physical residence with the primary caretaker parent (unless that parent is unfit). Declares that it is not in the best interest of children to:

(1) force parents to share custody over parental objection, or when there is a history of domestic or family violence;
(2) punish abused or protective parents who protect themselves or their children;
(3) presume that allegations of domestic and family violence are likely to be false, or made for tactical advantage during custody and divorce proceedings; and
(4) make "friendly parent" provisions a factor when there is an abusive parent.

Expresses the sense of the Congress that:

(1) child abuse and child sexual abuse allegations should be investigated regardless of when raised or whether the child has recanted the allegation;
(2) States should be more protective of victims of family and domestic violence in custody and visitation determinations and not order mediation, couples counseling, shared custody, mutual orders of protection, unsupervised visitation, or other measures when they may endanger such victims; and
(3) States should provide training in domestic violence and child abuse, as they impact custody, child support and visitation determinations, to all professionals who interact with children and parents.

CRC asked Joe Congresswatcher about this Resolution:

Question: How powerful would this Resolution be if passed?

Answer: A resolution suggests action, but does not require it. However, many states pass laws that carry out the intent of Congressional Resolutions on the theory that Congress knows what it is doing.

Q: What would it take to defeat the Resolution?

A: Most resolutions, like establishing National Dairy Week, or Postal Stamp Day, are so innocuous, they pass automatically. It would take just one courageous House member to defeat this Resolution. All he or she would have to do is let resolution sponsor Connie Morella, or the House leadership, know that it was a bad idea, and that he opposed it, and it should be withdrawn.

Q: Why courageous?

A: Because first, almost no Congressmember will take the time to consider what is in a Resolution. They have more important things to do. Second, Congressmembers don't want to oppose other members' Resolutions, because then their own Resolutions might get stricter scrutiny. And third, because the Congressmember might say this Resolution looks as though it is supposed to protect people. The answer is that all the protections in this Resolution are already law. Nobody should be trying to gut joint custody!

Q: Where can we find that one courageous Congressmember?

A: If six people in this country would beat up on their Congressmember night and day until one of them announced to the House that he or she was opposed to this Resolution, and would fight against it, that is all it would take.

Q: What about the states with a presumption for joint custody, either in law or practice?.

A: What about them?

Q: Wouldn't Congress be thumbing their noses at those states by saying they are wrong to have joint custody? I am speaking of California, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington, D.C.

A: Yes, the Resolution would be a terrible slap in the face at those states at a time when the federal government is supposedly showing restraint in regard to the states. So maybe you should work especially on Congressmembers from those states. Although your own Congressmember is the best one of all to work on.

Q: Thank you, Joe Congresswatcher.

To CRC Supporters: You can write letters or make phone calls to your House member (see addresses on adjoining page), or you can be one of those six who beat up on your House member until one announces he or she will fight against this Resolution. Let CRC know of your progress. We can help you on the Hill!

WRITE!

Dear—(your House member), Washington, D.C. 20515

Please oppose Congressional Resolution 182. Family violence must be eliminated, but allowing one parent to veto joint custody is not the way to do it. Children need both parents. Please oppose 182. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Sign your name, address, and date.

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Standby Guardianship Would Bypass Parents

A parent who is ill or dying would be allowed to avoid laws in all 50 states that automatically give custody to the other parent, under a resolution recently passed by Congress as part of the adoption law. The resolution is a "Sense of the Congress" that asks the states to pass laws allowing a parent who is chronically ill or near death to designate a "standby guardian" for the parent's minor children.

This would allow the ill or dying parent to bypass the other parent, something that is not currently allowed in any state.

"We must fight this provision to bypass custody to the other parent," said CRC President David L. Levy, "We must stop this attempt to bypass the natural parents of the child."

The sense of Congress, which was introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), states in its entirety:

Write to Congress!

Write to House members at:
Representative —
(name of your Representative)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Write to Senators at:
Senator — (name of your Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congress Seeks to Stop Custody from Going to the Other Parent if Custodial Parent Dies or is Ill

Sec. 403. "Sense of Congress Regarding Standby Guardianship."

"It is the sense of Congress that the States should have in effect laws and procedures that permit any parent who is chronically ill or near death, without surrendering parental rights, to designate a standby guardian for the parent's minor children, whose authority would take effect upon-

(1) the death of the parent;
(2) the mental incapacity of the parent; or
(3) the physical debilitation and consent of the parent."

CRC is asking child and family advocates to write to Congress to make a "technical correction" (which Congress often makes to passed legislation), so that it would read as follows:

"It is the sense of Congress that the States, without changing any state laws and procedures that gives custody first to the other parent, should have in effect laws and procedures that permit any parent who is chronically ill or near death, without surrendering parental rights, to designate a standby guardian...

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear —

I strongly object to Congress interfering with a child's right to two parents.

I refer to Sec. 403 of the adoption law, that urges the states to bypass laws and procedures in all 50 states that give custody to the other parent in the event of the death or incapacitation of a parent.

Please introduce a technical correction to the "Standby Resolution" passed as part of the Adoption Law to make certain that there is no "bypass" of the other parent.

The technical correction should state: "It is the sense of Congress that, without changing any state laws or procedures that give custody to the other parent, the States should have in place laws and procedures for guardianship of children of a parent..."

Children need their fathers and mothers. They do not need Congress trying to interfere with their moms and dads.

Please let me know if you will introduce the "technical amendment" to the resolution.

Signed

WE NEED A THOUSAND LETTERS, FAXES AND PHONE CALLS TO CONGRESS ASKING THEM TO MAKE THE 'TECHNICAL CORRECTION' TO THE STANDBY GUARDIANSHIP RESOLUTION.

SEND COPIES OF YOUR LETTERS TO CRC, INCLUDING COPIES OF REPLIES FROM CONGRESSMEMBERS.
YOUR LETTERS COUNT! DON'T COMPLAIN–WRITE!

ORDER CRC BOOK AND MAKE MONEY!

CRC has bulk copies of the now out-of-print CRC Book *The Best Parent is Both Parents*, which we can offer to you at a discount.

Order bulk copies (10 or more) of the book for only $4 a copy, resell the copies for the list price of $10 each, and make a profit for you or your organization! Contact CRC for more information. S/H $3 for the 1st copy, $1 for ea. addt'l copy.

Bills in Congress

The bills described below have been introduced in the current session of Congress. H.R. refers to the House of Representatives, S. refers to the Senate. The phone number of the committee handling the bill is provided below; you may call to check on the status of legislation, or express your views. It is even more important to let your own Representative and Senator know your views. The capital switchboard, which can connect you with the offices of all members of Congress and committees, is (202) CA4-3121 (224-3121). This is a 24-hour switchboard that can provide you night and day with names, addresses, and direct phone numbers of all members of Congress. During normal weekday business hours, the switchboard can connect you with any Congressional office on Capitol Hill. To save on expenses, you can contact the Congressmembers' local branch office in your district. BETTER YET, WRITE A LETTER AS DESCRIBED BELOW.

H.R. 2503, the "Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997", introduced by Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL) to establish felony violations for the failure to pay financial child support obligations and other purposes. Referred to House Judiciary Committee, Crime Subcommittee 202-225-3926. Similar to S. 226, introduced by Sen. Herbert Kohl (D-WI), referred to Senate Judiciary Committee, (202) 224-5225. Urge your House member or Senator to offer a "balancing amendment" to provide similar penalties for failure to honor court-ordered visitation. Congress can do this on the same basis that it passes financial child support legislation–to improve collections, because the Census Bureau finds that access (visitation) enforcement improves financial child support payments.

S. 97, introduced by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA), to amend the Internal Revenue Code to require the IRS to collect financial child support through wage withholding and to eliminate State enforcement of financial child support obligations other than medical support obligations. Referred to the Senate Finance Committee, (202) 224-4515. Similar to H.R. 2189, introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL), referred to Human Resources Subcommittee of House Ways and Means (202) 224-4515. Urge your House member or Senator to offer a "balancing amendment" to provide IRS enforcement of any financial penalties for access denial that any state may impose, such as fines or court costs for missed access, for the same reason as stated in the note to H.R. 2503 above.

S. 1075, introduced by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT), to provide demonstration projects to establish minimum financial child support payments. Referred to Finance Committee (202) 224-4515. Urge your House member or Senator to offer a "balancing amendment" to establish minimum access/visitation/parenting time of at least a third of the time on a year-round basis, because the Census Bureau says that parents with at least of the third of the time (joint physical custody) with their children pay up to twice as much in financial child support as parents with no access to their children.

H.R. 869, introduced by Rep. Christopher Cox (D-CA), to require a parent who is delinquent in financial child support to include his unpaid obligation in gross income and to allow custodial parents a bad debt deduction for unpaid financial child support payments. Referred to Human Resources Subcommittee of House Ways and Means, phone (202) 244-4515. Urge your House member or Senator to offer a "balancing amendment" to include unpaid visitation penalty in gross income and to allow non-custodial parents a bad debt collection for unpaid visitation fines or penalties.

H.R. 399, introduced by Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) to prohibit the provision of financial assistance by the Federal Government to any person who is more than 60 days delinquent in the payment of any financial child support obligation. A hearing was held on this bill in November, 1997, by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight (202) 225-5074. Write your House member or Senator recommending "balancing" this bill with a provision prohibiting the same assistance to anyone 60 days delinquent in honoring a court's access/visitation order.

Write to Congress!

Write to House members at:

Representative —
(name of your Representative)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Write to Senators at:

Senator — (name of your Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congress's Call to Fatherhood

by Jill Hollandsworth
CRC Intern

There has long been a Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, chaired by Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), and a Senate Children and Family Subcommittee, headed by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT). Now, because Congress has become aware of the need for more involved fathers, it has started the bipartisan Fatherhood Promotion Task Force.

The Task Force, initiated in June 1997, is co-chaired by Reps. Joseph Pitts (R-PA), Mike McIntyre (D-NY), Jim Rogan (R-CA), and Jim Turner (D-TX), and now has 32 members in Congress.

The Task Force is working with The National Fatherhood Initiative, in Gaithersburg, MD., but welcomes input from other groups.

Continued on page 18

Results of Research

Joint Physical Custody Lowers the Divorce Rate

States with high levels of physical custody awards (over 30%) in 1989 and 1990 have shown significantly greater decline in divorce rates in the following years from 1991 through 1995, compared with other states.

On the other hand, states that favored sole custody had more divorces involving children.

Data from the National Center for Health Statistics was available from 19 states on divorce and physical joint custody. CRC evaluator of research Richard Kuhn discovered this correlation while reviewing published government data.

The states with the highest overall ranking ar (1) Montana, (2) Kansas, (3) Connecticut, (4) Idaho, and (5) Rhode Island.

Joint physical custody means that a child spends at least 30% of the time with a parent, although awards of up to 50/50 shared parenting time are not uncommon.

"These findings indicate that public policies promoting sole custody may be contributing to the high divorce rate, while policies promoting joint physical custody have the reverse effect," said CRC President David L. Levy. "The government collected the data, but this is the first time that anyone has investigated that data for the relationship between joint physical custody and divorce."

"If a parent is able to forecast that they have total ownership of the child post-divorce and almost all of the child's time, as usually happens in sole custody, there is little deterrent to divorce," said John Guidubaldi, D.Ed. of John Carroll and Kent State Universities, Ohio, co-author of the report. "Joint custody, according to the data, provides that deterrent."

"America is looking at many ways to reduce the high divorce rate," said Levy. "Joint custody must now be added to those approaches."

Copies of the 11-page report are available to CRC members, upon receipt of a stamped (52 cents) self-addressed envelope. Non-members send such an envelope with $5 for handling.

Placement With Relatives Allowed in New Adoption Law

Although the "Standby Guardianship" resolution described on page 6 would bypass custody laws in the states when a parent is ill or dying, the adoption law passed by Congress would allow a transfer of custody to a fit and willing relative prior to *adoption* of a child. This provision, recommended by CRC and other child and family advocates, was retained in the adoption bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in November, 1997.

The intent of the law is to overhaul the nation's foster care system, and to speed up the adoption of abused and neglected children who now spend an average of two years in foster homes.

"Family and child advocates are glad that the law provides that custody can be transferred to relatives after foster care and prior to adoption. But we also requested a provision, which is not in the law, that custody could be transferred to a relative before placing a child in foster care in the first place," said Stuart Miller, a family law advocate who met with Congressional staff and Congressmembers regarding the bill. "If relatives are o.k. to obtain custody of a child prior to adoption, why wouldn't they be o.k. to obtain custody of the child prior to foster care?"

The law reinforces the need to contact the other parent and/or other relatives prior to adoption, before the state could obtain the financial incentive of up to $6,000 for each adoption obtained by termination of parental rights.

Under the new law, states will be required to begin proceedings to terminate the birth parents' rights after a child has spent 15 months in foster care, and almost instantly if a child has been abandoned, tortured, chronically physically or sexually abused, or if the parents have murdered or assaulted a sibling.

The legislation represents a fundamental shift in the philosophy of child welfare, from a presumption that the chief consideration ought to be returning a child to his biological parents, to one in which the health and safety of the child is paramount.

State officials will continue to make the day-to-day decisions about when a child should be removed from the home and whether the child should be put up for adoption. But the new law gives states a strong financial incentive to move children out of the foster care system, which has grown 85 percent since 1980.

It is not clear why Congress decided that fit and willing relatives could obtain custody of a child prior to adoption, but not prior to foster care. "Relatives who want custody or adoption of a child prior to foster care should ask for custody anyway," said CRC President David L. Levy, "If there is a fit mother or father, they need to be considered first for custody, but as a back-up, we need to keep the child within the family network with relatives whenever those relatives are fit and willing."

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11th National CRC Conference Draws Officials, Researchers

Officials from eight states, Clinton Administration officials, major researchers, writers, and custody reform advocates, were among the 175 people at CRC's 11th national conference October 23-26, 1997. The conference was held at the Quality Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.

"The conference demonstrated a new spirit of cooperation between state and federal child support officials and CRC, because the $10 million a year in access/visitation grants funded by Congress are in many cases being administered by state child support officials who need our help," said CRC Ohio coordinator Margaret Wuwert.

"The $10 million is small, but it represents long-sought recognition of the need for more child-parental access," Nebraska CRC co-coordinator Lyn Huerter told one of the state officials at the conference.

The conference included more than 20 individual speakers and panels, a bookfair, banquet, exhibits, film theater, and sock hop. See some highlights below (other highlights will appear in future issues of this newsletter).

Sanford Braver, Ph.D., researcher, Arizona State University, Tempe chose the CRC conference to reveal for the first time the results of his research on the economic impact of divorce on fathers and mothers.

Braver

Braver, a federally funded researcher at Arizona State University, said he surveyed data that no previous researchers have researched, particularly the five tax advantages that flow to the custodial parent, and visitation expenses by non-custodial parents, such as meals and recreation costs.

When factoring in those variables, Braver found that the income of custodial and non-custodial parents post-divorce are on average roughly equal.

Braver listed the five tax advantages to the custodial parent as:

- child support, in which not only is the federal and state tax generally paid by the non-custodial parent, but also social security taxes;
- tax credit for child care;
- lower tax rate for head of household;
- exemption for the child, currently $2,500 per child; and
- for low income custodial parents, the earned income tax credit.

Braver said he had his findings reviewed by other researchers on the economic impact of divorce, who find them to be a serious challenge to the generally accepted data that mothers suffer an income drop after divorce, while fathers see their income rise.

Braver noted that researcher Lenore Weitzman finally admitted error regarding her widely quoted figure published in the 1980's that mothers suffered a 74 percent drop in their standard of living post-divorce, while fathers enjoyed a 42 percent increase. Braver said many researchers, including he, challenged Weitzman's widely quoted figure.

He said other researchers produced less severe differences in fathers and mothers post-divorce standard of living, reporting that mothers' income declined about 26 percent post divorce, and fathers' income increased about 14 percent. But even these figures, said Braver, "are an exaggeration of the relative economic impact of divorce on women and men" when you account for the previously unreported variables of tax consequences and visitation expenses.

Braver said he found it too difficult to compute:

- Transportation costs between parents. This includes the difficulty of computing long-distance summer transportation costs. However, Braver did find that the kinds of cars mothers and fathers drive after divorce to be roughly comparable;
- Residential expenses. He said the usual assumption is that marital property is split equally after divorce, and that the non-custodial parent will not maintain a household large enough to maintain visitation. But if the non-custodial parent does maintain such a residence, the expenses for such are not taken into consideration in any of the economic reports, including his.
- Medical Costs. The assumption is that all medical costs are borne by the custodial parent, but this may not be true, and is not measured.
- The costs of starting over. Braver said fathers usually bear most of the expenses of starting a new life after divorce. If that is true, how do you measure for that? Those expenses may be short term, but who knows exactly what the costs are?

"There are instances of disproportionate impoverishment by moms, but also cases where impoverishment goes the other way."

He said his data "squarely disconfirms the notion of feminization of poverty."

The problem with much published data, Braver said, is that it commingles never-married families with divorced families. "Never-married parents present a real economic problem, but divorces usually involve people who are more well to do than the never-married."

He said that about 14 percent of divorced mothers live below the poverty level, according to government data. He said that because the incomes of fathers and mothers post divorce are generally roughly equal, poverty will not be solved by stricter enforcement of support.

He noted that not all researchers agree on what constitutes the poverty level.

He cautioned that the post-divorce data from researchers, including his, is based on mothers and fathers one year after divorce. He said that the longer one measures, the more likely the differen-

Continued on page 10

11th National CRC Conference

Continued from page 9

tial in income will improve for mothers, because mothers will rehabilitate their job skills. In addition, the majority of divorced people remarry; if a father remarries, he will acquire expenses faster than income, and the opposite is true for women in general.

More than 300 families formed part of Braver's study. Braver will publish a book in 1998 that will incorporate these and other findings.

(Note: CRC issued a report about the tax-advantages for custodial parents 10 years ago. However, Braver is the first researcher we are aware of to acknowledge these tax advantages).

Barbara Wagner, Ph.D., custody evaluator, Los Angeles, CA

Wagner said that:

- The marriage of family law courts and mental health professionals, like any relationship, is a connection that can create negative and positive results for a family experiencing divorce or for unmarried parents.

Wagner

- On the positive side, the union of the courts and mental professionals can benefit children who are enduring severe emotional pain from the rupturing of their primary security base or from the misconnections and miscommunications between parents.
- On the negative side, there can be perceived or real unethical behavior and/or blatant biases by a mental health professional; and lack of integrity or visible preference, just as there can be unethical practices and extreme biases from attorneys and judges.

Biases and other unethical practices can increase trauma beyond the usual difficulties engendered by the adversarial nature of the litigation process.

Wagner also said that:

- Unethical behavior by mental health professionals usually occurs when a custody evaluator or therapist hears only one side of the parental dyad without taking an overview of the family dynamics by interviewing the child or by only observing each parent's interaction with the child, and not the three of them (two parents and child) together. Lacking a full picture creates bias toward one parent or another, and also often denies the child his or her birthright for access to both parents.

"In addition, if the focus of the evaluation or treatment is not on the best interests of the child, which is psychologically defined as unrestricted access to both parents, then parental alienation is much more likely to occur. Thus, the mental health professional provides another avenue for the alienation process to intensify or at least to continue."

She noted there are guidelines for custody evaluators and for therapists who treat minor children by the American Psychological Association, the American College of Forensic Psychologists, and individual state psychological and licensed treating therapist associations. "However, ethical behavior, as with any practicing professional, is governed more by that individual's internal moral values than by any external ethical code created by professional organizations, governmental regulating bodies, or legal statutes."

She said many divorcing families surrender to the judicial process with the hope of receiving justice which supports the parental rights they already hold, but find a system only equipped to dissolve the family structure.

She urged more education for parents, children, judges, and attorneys provided by neutral and experienced professionals about the impact of the process of family dissolution on parent-child relationships, so a healing opportunity arises.

She urged mediation rather than litigation to help preserve both parents' relationship with their child.

Other speakers at the conference and their topics included:

Richard Gardner, M.D., Cresskill, New Jersey, "Differentiating between the Parental Alienation Syndrome and Bona-Fide Abuse";

a panel of Ron Haskins, staff director, Human Resources Subcommittee of House Ways and Means Committee, U.S. Congress (the source of welfare reform and access visitation legislation in the House), and Douglas Steiger, minority staff, Senate Finance Committee, "Capitol Hill Developments Affecting Children and Families";

a panel of David Gray Ross, director, federal child support office; David Arnaudo, federal administrator of the access grants, both Washington, D.C.; Teresa Kaiser, head of the Missouri child support office, who is administering an access grant, and CRC's David L. Levy, "The New Access/Visitation Grants for All 50 States to Share In";

A. Jayne Major, Ph.D., author of "How to Win the Custody Wars Without Casualties," Los Angeles, California;

Gerald Solomon, Esquire, and Jim Milko, Esquire, New Carrollton, Maryland, "Custody Litigation: How to Keep Your Children Out of the Middle";

a panel of Judge Woodrow Lewis, Jr., Chesapeake Beach, Virginia; Master Sherman West, Prince George's County, Maryland, Jim Keim, Family Therapy Institute, Rockville, Maryland, and Michael L. Oddenino, CRC General Counsel, Arcadia, California, "How to Create a Win-Win Situation in Court";

a banquet talk by Teresa Kaiser, head of Missouri's child support office, "The Rediscovery of Parenting in America";

Nancy Heleno Obetz, Vienna, Virginia, "Guilt and Shame: The Difference for Parents"; Robert Bauserman, Ph.D., "A Meta-Analysis of Joint Custody Research"; John Guidubaldi, D.Ed.,

Continued on page 21

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___ **CR-9702** Release Of New CRC Report on "The Positive Effects On Joint Custody - David L. Levy, President CRC

___ **CR-9703** What Organizations and Foundations Are Doing To Strengthen Families - National Child Support Enforcement Assn.

___ **CR-9705** Differentiating Between the Parent Alienation Syndrome and Bona-Fide Abuse - Richard Gardner, M.D., Author

___ **CR-9706** Capitol Hill Developments Affecting Children and Families Welfare Reform, Kinship Care as an alternative to Foster Care, and Access / Visitation: Ron Haskins, Staff Director, Human Resources Subcommittee of Ways and Means, and other Congressional Staff

___ **CR-9707** 10 Tips on How to Build a Stronger, Bigger, More Financially Secure CRC Chapter: Bill & Lynn Huerter, CRC Nebraska

___ **CR-9708** The Economic Impact of Divorce On Fathers and Mothers Sanford Braver, Ph.D., Researcher

___ **CR-9609** What's Next in Parenting Education - Elizabeth Hickey, Dir Mediation and Divorce Center in Utah

___ **CR-9710** The New Access / Visitation Grants for All 50 States to Share In. How Many Grants Have Been Awarded? What Can Groups Do Now? Grant Application Suggestions David Gray Ross, Director of the Federal Child Support Office

___ **CR-9711** The Positive Effect of Father Presence on Children's Educational Development Christine Nord of Westat, Inc and Nicholas Zill, Ph.D. Moderator: Jim Cook, President Joint Custody Association

___ **CR-9713** Custody Litigation: How to Keep Your Children Out of the Middle of Custody Battles - Gerald Solomon, Esq

___ **CR-9714** Deciding What's Best For The Children - Jayne Major, Parenting Ed., and Barbara Wagner, Custody Evaluator

___ **CR-9715** How To Have A Win-win Situation in Court - Several Judges, Moderator: Michael L. Oddenino, Esq., CRC Counsel

___ **CR-9716** The Rediscovery of Parenting in America Teresa Kaiser, Esq., Dir. of MO Child Support Office and Access / Visitation implementation

___ **CR-9717** Guilt and Shame: The Difference for Parents, Nancy Heleno Obetz. How Joint Custody Reduces the Divorce Rate: John Guidubaldi, D.Ed.

___ **CR-9718** Canadian Efforts For Balances of Children and Families - Anne Cools, Canadian Senator

___ **CR-9719** National Trends in Family Law Legislation and How to Affect Them: Ron Henry, Esq., Washington, DC

___ **CR-9720** Healthy Things You Can Do For Your Children and Yourself - Through Chiropractic Care - Gary Santora, D.C

CRC's Annual Conference Recordings Are Professionally Produced By The Non-Custodial Parent's Resource Center, (NCPRC). For A Complete Catalog Of Resources, Containing Audio & VideoTapes Of Various Related Organization's Conferences, Books and Specialty Items, Call Or Write Us. Is Your Organization Or Group having a Conference, Let Us Provide You With Exciting Details Of Our Quality Recording Services and Fund Raising Opportunities. You May Reach Us By Phone: (318) 368-6232, By Email: ncprc@bayou.com, By Internet: http://www.bayou.com/~ncprc or By Mail: P.O. Box 742, Farmerville, LA 71241 or Call Our Order Only Hot - Line Toll Free: 1-888-23-NCPRC.

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Divorced Women, New Lives, by Ellie Wymard, 1990. (SB-241) Moving personal stories and insights about women who have been been divorced.	4.95	*Extra Low Price* **2.00**
How to Survive Your Parent's Divorce: Kids Advice to Kids, by Gayle Kimball, 1994. (SB-112) Easy-to-read one-of-a-kind guide for young people and their parents as they reshape their lives post-divorce.	9.95	4.00
For the Sake of the Children, by Kris Kline and Stephen Pew, 1992. (HB-216) Discusses how to share your children with your ex-spouse despite your anger. Kline is CRC's Florida coordinator.	18.75	9.00
Divorce Book for Parents, by Vicki Lansky, 1987. (HB-204) Warmly supportive and reassuring, this comprehensive guide speaks to all divorced and divorcing parents.	18.95	9.00
At My Father's Wedding: Reclaiming our True Masculinity, by John Lee, 1991. (HB-242) A ground-breaking work about the Father Wound and the pain a child can bear because of it.	10.00	*Extra Low Price* **2.00**
I Think Divorce Stinks, by Marcia Lebowitz, 1992. (SB-2012) Helps children recognize that it is appropriate to have negative feelings about divorce and to express those feelings.	4.95	2.00
The Divorce Decisions Workbook, by Margorie Engel, 1992. (SB-2006) Planning and action guide with 55 formulas to help you in four key decision areas: financial, legal, practical, and emotional.	15.00	7.00
The Myth of Male Power, by Warren Farrell, 1993. (SB-245) Rock solid and authentic decimation of the myth of male advantage ... sweeps aside stereotyped assumptions to uncover a deeper truth.	13.00	6.00
Why Men Are the Way They Are, by Warren Farrell, 1986. (SB-243) Provides insights into loved one's secret insights and desires.	5.99	3.00
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Protocols for Sex Abuse Evaluations, by Richard Gardner, M.D., 1995. (HB-1007) Presents a new series of criteria and interview sequences to help examiners involved in sex abuse evaluations.	40.00	30.00
Discipline That Works, by Thomas Gordon, 1995. (SB-117) Dr. Gordon, founder of P.E.T. (Parent Effectiveness Training) shows ways to empower children to become self-reliant.	10.95	4.00
Parent vs. Parent, by Stephen Herman, 1990. (HB-209) Practical information on how to avoid "winning" and "losing" by protecting everyone's best interests.	20.95	9.00
The Adult Children of Divorce Workbook, by Mary Hirschfeld, 1992 (SB-2009) Visualization exercises help readers root our destructive feelings left over from their childhood.	11.95	5.00
The Divorce Workbook, by Sally Ives, David Fassler & Michelle Lasch, 1985 (SB-2010) How to facilitate honest and open communication between adults and children at the traumatic time of separation and divorce.	12.95	6.00
Negotiating Love: How Women and Men Can Resolve Their Differences, by Riki Robbins Jones, 1995. (SB-246) Points our destructive habits by both genders which, when realized, strengthen families and relationships.	10.00	*Extra Low Price* **3.00**

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The Parental Alienation Syndrome, A guide for mental health and legal professionals, by Richard Gardner, M.D. (1995) An authoritative work on the Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS).

SB-1004 $30.00

Protocols for Sex Abuse Evaluations, by Richard Gardner, M.D. (1995) Presents a new series of criteria and interview sequences to help examiners involvedin sex abuse evaluations.

HB-1007 $39.95

Children Held Hostage: Dealing with programmed and brainwashed children, by Stanley Clawar, Ph.D. and Brynne Rivlin, M.M.S. (1991) Published by the ABA's Section for Family Law, this book discusses a 12-year study of programming and brainwashing during custody battles.

SB-1003 $45.00

50/50 Parenting, by Gayle Kimball, Ph.D. Almost 300 co-parents and 83 children report on life in Married, Divorced, and Step-family situations.

SB-113 $9.95

The Good Divorce, by Constance R. Ahrons, Ph.D. (1994) An outstanding book with a powerful message:

while divorce is not 'good,' there is a path to a 'good divorce' where parents cooperate fully for the sake of their children.

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My Mom and Dad are Getting a Divorce, by Florence Bienenfeld, Ph.D. (1984) Cartoon style, story form focuses on children ages 4-12. Helps them through the feelings of sadness, loss, hurt, anger, guilt, helplessness and fear triggered by a divorce.

SB-2004 $3.95

Ashes to Ashes...Families to Dust, by Dean Tong (1996) False Accusations of Child Abuse. A Roadmap for survivors which helps to answer their questions.

SB-2014 $15.95

Putting Kids First, by Michael Oddenino. A must read for caring parents and professionals, by CRC's General Counsel. Includes a children's bill of rights.

SB-248 $9.95

NEW!! The Fathers Emergency Guide to Divorce/Custody Battle, A Tour Through the Predatory World of Judges, Lawyers, Psychologists and Social Workers in the Subculture of Divorce, by Robert Seidenberg, with the legal insights of Williams Dawes, Esq. (1997). A powerful new book whose title says its all.

SB-247 $15.00

Family Evaluations in Child Custody, Mediation, Arbitration and Litigation, by Richard Gardner, M.D. (1989) In this update, Gardner proposes a three-phase system to remove child custody evaluations from courtroom litigation.

HB-603 $35.00

The Joint Custody Handbook, by Miriam Cohen (1991). A 1991 update of one of the classic books on joint custody. Contains sample parenting agreements.

HB-213 $10.95

Families, Crisis, and Caring, by Barry T. Brazelton (1989) America's favorite pediatrician talks about the involved father, parental rivalry, grandparenting, the loss of a parent, fathering alone, and other issues.

HB-219 $18.00

When Parents Kidnap, by Geoffrey Greif and Rebecca Hegar (1993) This book captures the experiences of parents searching for their children and abductors who have taken them, also makes public policy recommendations.

HB-901 $22.95

REPORTS

UPDATED 1997

Interference with Access (Visitation) as a Tort. Not a frequent remedy, but one that may be available. Arguments and case citations "The tort, as a charge against one person for invading the rights of another, is clearly reasonable as the interference with visitation is just that—one person taking something from another that he has no right to by law.

R116 $10.00

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LB-104 $10.00

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How to Win as a Stepfamily, by Emily Visher, Ph.D. and John Visher, M.D. (1982) The co-founders of the Stepfamily Association of America answer questions and give suggestions on how to make stepfamilies work.

HB-301 $13.95

Making it as a Stepparent, New Roles/New Rules, by Claire Berman (1986). Former president of the Stepfamily Association of America provides practical help and insights.

SB-304 $7.95

Stepfamilies Stepping Ahead, edited by Mala Burt for the Stepfamily Association of America.

SB-303 $9.95

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Between Love and Hate, A Guide to Civilized Divorce (SB-605A) by Lois Gold, M.S.W., 1992 Learn the fundamental skills of negotiation, conflict resolution and mediation, for everyone's good.	(HB) (SB)	24.95 13.95	20.00 9.00
Families Apart, by Melinda Blau, 1993. 10 Keys to Successful Co-Parenting. A blend of the author's own research, and that of other experts, and rich in anecdotal information.	(HB) HB-223B (SB) SB-223A	22.95 13.00	18.00 10.00
Fatherless America, Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem, by David Blankenhorn (1995). Why civilized societies need to uphold the idea of fatherhood.	HB-236	29.95	24.00
Another Way Home, by John Thorndike, 1996. A burning, beautiful memoire.	(HB)	24.00	10.00
Helping Your Children through Divorce, Florence Bienenfeld, Ph.D., (1995) A resource book depicting the impact of divorce on children.	SB-201A	11.95	7.00
Mom's House, Dad's House, by Isolina Ricci, Ph.D., (1980) Making shared custody work: How parents can make two homes for their children after divorce.	SB-202	10.00	8.00
Surviving the Break-Up, How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce, by Judith Wallerstein, Ph.D and Joan Kelly, Ph.D., (1980) A classic that is still valid in discussing the problems of children being raised by single parents.	SB-220	14.00	10.00
A Hole in My Heart, by Claire Berman, (1991) A book that will enable adult children of divorce to recognize the role they play in changing patterns in their lives.	SB-225	10.00	8.00
Don't Blame Me, Daddy, False Accusations of Child Sexual Abuse, by Dean Tong, (1992) This book provides help in distinguishing between true and false allegations of child sexual abuse.	SB-226	11.95	9.00
Who Says Men Don't Talk or Listen, by Richard Austin, Jr., Ph.D.(1993) A guide to communication between the sexes.	SB-231	9.95	6.00
Loving and Listening, by Melinda Blau (1996) A Parent's Book of Daily Inspirations for Rebuilding the Family After Divorce	SB-235	13.00	10.00

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In the Courts

Child Support Recovery Act

Three recent cases have upheld the constitutionality of the federal Child Support Recovery Act, which makes the non-payment of support for an out-of-state child a federal crime. The issue of constitutionality had arisen because domestic relations matters are primarily within state jurisdiction, and because a 1995 case, *U.S. v. Lopez*, had established criteria for federal intervention in such matters.

In one case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit held on Sept. 2, 1997, that the Child Support Recovery Act is a valid exercise of Congressional power because it regulates the non-payment of interstate child support obligations. In addition, child support orders that obligate one parent in one state to make payments to another parent in another state are functionally equivalent to interstate contracts, the court said.

[U.S. v. Black, CA 7, No. 96-3890, 9/3/97]

In another case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit on Sept. 8, 1997, rejected a father's argument that his support obligation for his two sons did not substantially affect interstate commerce in such a way as to trigger Congress' power under the U.S. constitution. The court said that, even though the obligor's duty to pay did not arise out of a typical business transaction, it still involved interstate commerce, because his obligation to pay money crossed state lines.

[U.S. v. Williams, CA 11, No. 96-3009, 9/8/97]

In the third case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled June 23, 1997, that child support payments, or the debts resulting from non-payment, are "things in, or having a substantial relation to, interstate commerce." The Child Support Recovery Act "does not regulate domestic relations but, rather, assists the states in enforcing their judgments and orders," the Appeals Court said.

[U.S. v. Crawford, CA 8, No. 96-2808, 6/23/97.]

Informal Change in Children's Residence

A father is not obliged to pay a mother child support for a period during which, as a result of an informal agreed-upon change in arrangements, the children lived with him, the Indiana Court of Appeals has decided. Although the mother was the custodial parent, shortly after the parents' 1989 divorce, the children went to live with the father, who paid nearly all their expenses. The general rule is that noncustodial parents get no credit for payments outside the context of the support order, the court said, but there is a "narrow exception." The exception covers situations where, by agreement with the custodial parent, the children live with the non-custodial parent. A lower court had ruled that the father had to pay the mother $15,950 in child support arrearages.

[In re Jackson and Hamilton, Ind. CtApp, No. 81A01-9702-CV-61, 5/30/97, released 6/20/97]

Modification of Joint Custody

A joint custody arrangement may be modified where one parent exhibits severe animosity towards the other, the Indiana Court of Appeals decided. The Appeals Court affirmed a lower court decision that the continuing conflict between two divorced parents, regarding their young daughter, was a substantial change of circumstances justifying award of sole custody to the father. Such modifications could be made if one parent could demonstrate the other had committed misconduct so egregious that it placed a child's mental and physical welfare in jeopardy, the Appeals Court said.

[Hansen v. Spolnik, Ind CtApp, No. 32A01-9803-CV-79, 8/29/97]

Different Treatment for Mothers, Fathers

In a case challenging sexual stereotypes, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments Nov. 4, 1997, on a national policy that favors mothers over fathers in determining whether children born out of wedlock overseas can become U.S. citizens.

Federal law says a child born in a foreign country to an unmarried American mother and a foreign father is automatically considered a U.S. citizen, but citizenship barriers arise for a child born out of wedlock whose father is American but whose mother is not.

Lorelyn Penero Miller, who was born out of wedlock 27 years ago to a Filipino mother and an American father, claimed the distinction violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws. Her father had been stationed in the Philippines for the U.S. military.

During oral argument, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, a former women's rights advocate, suggested the law was unfairly based on a stereotype that women have closer ties to their children than do men.

But Justice John Paul Stevens suggested it was reasonable for Congress to believe that a U.S. serviceman who fathers a child on a tour of duty might not be ready to develop a parental relationship.

[A ruling in the case of Miller v. Albright is likely sometime before the court recesses for the summer in 1998.] (from The Washington Post, Nov. 5, 1997)]

All the cases above except the last one are summarized from Family Law Reporter. They appear here by permission of the publisher, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.

FAMILY FACTS

Photocopy and distribute the "Family Facts" on the next page! Use as hand-outs when visiting the Legislature, disseminating information to the courts or the media, or as a resource for testimony and Letters to the Editor. "Family Facts" is a regular feature of this newsletter. Send us your verified facts (with actual copies, sources and dates) to "Family Facts," CRC.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Family Facts

Fathers Have Positive Impact on Children's Academic Performance

If non-resident fathers are involved in their children's school, children are more likely to get A's, to enjoy school, and to participate in extracurricular activities. Children are also less likely to have ever repeated a grade or been suspended or expelled if their non-resident fathers are involved in their schools.

These are the conclusions of a report by Christine Winquist Nord, Ph.D., and Nicholas Zill, Ph.D., of Westat, presented at the Children's Rights Council's 11th national conference, October, 1997.

The report used data from the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES:967). The section Nord and Zill reported at CRC focused on nearly 5,500 children living apart from their fathers. The report concluded that:

- Over-all, the results provide strong evidence that non-resident fathers' involvement in their children's school is important to children;
- Fathers need to play a meaningful role in their children's lives in order to exert a positive influence. It is not contact, per se, that is important, but active participation in children's school lives that matters when it comes to educational success;
- Many non-resident fathers are not very involved in their children's lives, let alone in their children's schools. Although the proportion of non-resident fathers who maintain contact with their children is greater now than it was 15 years ago, a sizable minority do not keep in touch with their children.

Nord and Zill used four activities to measure fathers' involvement:

- Attended a general school meeting, such as back-to-school night or a PTA meeting;
- Gone to a regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conference;
- Attended a school or class event, such as a play or sports event or science fair; or
- Acted as a volunteer at the school or served on a committee.

Sixty-nine percent of children in kindergarten through 12th grade who have seen their non-resident fathers in the past year have fathers who participated in none of the above four school activities. Thirteen percent had fathers who participated in only one activity; 28 percent, in at least 2 school activities, and 9 percent, in three or more of the activities.

Even among fathers maintaining contact, the majority are not very involved in one important area of their children's lives—their children's schools. Nord and Zill said this data should serve as a wake-up call to resident and non-resident parents, and to schools: non-resident fathers can make a difference!

From Nonresident Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools, available from Westat, 1650 Research Blvd., Rockville, MD 20850, or from CRC, 300 I Street N.E., Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002.

Liberals say Income has Little Effect on Poverty

Two recent books by left-leaning academics have surprisingly reinforced the conservative argument that income per se has a smaller impact on how poor children fare than many Americans—and most traditional liberals—believe.

At the conclusion of their 610-page tome, "Consequences of Growing Up Poor", Greg Duncan and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn report that they and their fellow researchers found no evidence that "income transfers alone would produce a dramatic improvement in the physical health, mental health or...behavioral development of (low-income) children."

Unlike many other studies that use one-time snapshots of the poor, both books rely on new research that tracks poor families over years, even decades.

In "What Money Can't Buy": Susan Mayer calculates that even if policymakers miraculously managed to double the income of the poorest 20 percent of families, the national teen-childbearing rate would drop only from 20 percent to 18 percent, the high school dropout rate would go from 17.3 percent to 16.1 percent, and the mean number of years people were in school would rise from 12.80 to 12.83.

She concludes, too, that doubling poor families' income would hardly change the proportion of young women who become single mothers and might actually increase idleness among young men by reducing their incentive to work.

Reluctantly, Mayer reaches a very unliberal conclusion: Parents' character—their skills, diligence, honesty, and good health—probably matter more to children's prospects than money. "Although children's opportunities are unequal," she writes, "income inequality is not the primary reason."

See article in U.S. News & World Report, June 2, 1997, by David Whitman, reporting on "What Money Can't Buy", published by Harvard University Press, and Consequences of Growing Up Poor, published by Russell Sage Foundation.

From Volume 12, Number 4, FALL 1997/WINTER 1998, *Speak Out for Children*, newsletter of
the Children's Rights Council, 300 "I" Street N.E., Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002-4389
phone (202) 547-6227

AFCC and Hugh McIsaac—Gaining Ground for Mediation

The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) has played a major national role for the past 35 years in promoting conciliation, lso known as mediation.

McIsaac

Based in Madison, Wisconsin, under director Ann Milne and assistant director Peter Salem, the AFCC distributes educational information and sponsors conferences, including co-sponsorship of the World Congress of Family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth in San Francisco in May, 1997. CRC General Counsel Michael L. Oddenino and CRC Parent Education Director Elizabeth Hickey were among the speakers at the San Francisco conference.

AFCC conferences bring together judges, court personnel, mediators, and other experts involved in conflict resolution.

The AFCC also sponsors the Family and Conciliation Courts Review, a quarterly publication edited for the past 11 years by Hugh McIsaac. For the past five years, McIsaac has directed the Multnomah County (Portland) Oregon Family Court Services. Before that, McIsaac was long-time director of the Los Angeles Conciliation Court, the largest conciliation court in the country (more divorces than any other county or city).

CRC noted with interest McIsaac's swan song in the Review's October, 1997, issue. He will leave the Conciliation Court and the Review in February, 1998, to work with the Oregon Family Institute, the Oregon Family Law Advisory Committee, and mediation panels.

CRC asked Jim Cook, president of the Joint Custody Association, Los Angeles, to evaluate McIsaac. Cook said "McIsaac's contribution to family law is that he has worked tirelessly for many years to make conciliation (mediation) acceptable, and as attached as possible to the court system. The states have been going through an era of diminished tax-based income, with increased court costs, because more people are going through divorce. Therefore, many states have been cutting the least essential services first, such as conciliation. McIsaac has been extremely important in defending the mediation/conciliation process. He has bridged the era from the time when conciliation was known as reconciliation, to the modern era of mediation of inevitable divorces." "AFCC is the closest organization of practicioners to CRC issues in the country," said David Dinn, a longtime AFCC member, who is also CRC Indiana coordinator.

In his final column as editor, McIsaac traces the goals of conflict resolution, which he says should take place "through good information provided through court-connected education programs, through better conflict resolution models such as mediation and attorney settlement, through non-adversarial child-centered evaluations, and through fair court hearings—when necessary."

A sampling of articles in the Review's October, 1997, issue reveals the magazine's scope:

* Joan B. Kelly, Ph.D., co-author of "Surviving the Break-Up", Corte Madera, CA., observes that there is little consensus about what criteria constitutes a child's best interest or how those criteria should be applied.

* Wolfgang B. Hirczy de Mino of Oklahoma State University discusses the presumption for joint custody in Texas "which has mitigated the winner-loser mentality," and which has won "wide-spread acceptance by bench and bar by its successful implementation" for children of unwed parents as well as children of divorce.

* Cheryl D. Lee, Ph.D., of Arizona State University, discusses "Eight Keys to Passing Parent Education Legislation."

McIsaac's predecessor as editor was the late Meyer Elkin, a CRC advisor. Lawyer and academic Andrew Schepard, School of Law, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY., will succeed McIsaac.

Membership in AFCC, which includes the Review, is $125. The individual annual Review subscription rate is $58. Contact Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, phone (805) 499-0721, or visit a library that carries journals.

Jim Cook Helps Kids in Bosnia

Jim Cook, president of the Joint Custody Association, has spent part of the last two summers in Croatia helping Bosnian refugee children at a youth camp on the Adriatic Sea. He spent four weeks each summer. More than 100 war refugee children come to the camp each summer. At least half of the children have lost both parents in the fighting, while the remainder have lost one parent. "There is a deliberate policy of extermination of men on the part of some of the combatants," said Cook.

Cook recommends the new movie "Welcome to Sarajevo" which represents an "effective usage of documentary footage and theatrical recreations to get across the plight of the children in the former Yugoslavia."

Help Us Help You!

CRC needs equipment:

()computers
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CRC needs volunteers to:

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()answer the phone
()work with celebrities
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()what else would you like to do?

Contact the national office or the chapter nearest you to ask about their needs.

THANK YOU.

Congress's Call to Fatherhood

Continued from page 7

CRC has met with all four co-chairmen, to offer our assistance with information and resources.

The Task Force's effort is informative, rather than legislative. Its mission is to increase the number of committed fathers by the promotion of fatherhood through public awareness campaigns, education of Congressional members on the problems of fatherless homes, and organizing of conference and forums.

In July 1997, World Heavyweight Boxing Champion Evander Holyfield was invited by Rep. Pitts to testify on the importance of fatherhood to a House committee. Future plans call for two Congressional forums, one in the Spring, and the other in June 1998.

Information that is expected to be discussed at future forums are the research showing that children who grow up with two active parents are likely to show lower rates of delinquency, mental illness, youth suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and running away from home. In addition, teenage girls without fathers are 53% more likely to give birth as teenagers, and 164% more likely to have birth out of wedlock, while violent male criminals, including 60% of rapists, 75% of adolescents charged with murder, and 70% of long term inmates, grew up without fathers. If you wish information on the Task Force, you may contact the offices of any of the four co-chairs.

You may also wish to ask your member of Congress to join the Task Force, if they have not already joined.

CRC Guideline Available

Copies of the model child support guideline prepared by CRC that is based on a child having two parents are still available from the federal government.

This is the first time that the federal government has ever distributed a guideline that takes into account the direct expenditures on a child by the non-custodial parent.

To obtain a copy of the federal publication, phone (202) 401-9383, which is the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Child Support Reference Center, located at 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW, Washington, D.C. 20447. There is no charge for the publication, entitled "Child Support Guidelines: The Next Generation", as long as supplies last.

Copies of the guideline itself as published by the government are available from CRC for $5.00 for CRC members, and $10.00 for non-members, including shipping and handling.

If you would like to contact Don Bieniewicz, author of the guideline, for his assistance in getting this guideline adopted in the states, write him at 10004 Fairoaks Road, Vienna, VA 22181, contact him via email at DonBien@erols.com, or phone 703-255-0837 (evenings).

CRC CO-SPONSORED CONFERENCE

CRC co-sponsored a conference on Children and Fathers with several government agencies and other organizations in October, 1997. The co-sponsorship is part of CRC policy to network with governmental and non-organizations to improve the lives of children and families. The flyer for the conference is reproduced below. For a brief synopsis of talks at the conference, send $5 for photocopying and a self-addressed stamped envelope to CRC.

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Inside CRC

Congressmembers Stabenow, Boehlert CRC Advisors

Congresswoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Congressman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) have accepted invitations to become CRC advisors.

Debbie Stabenow

Stabenow

Stabenow, a first term member of Congress, represents Michigan's 8th district, including Lansing. She was a member of the Michigan legislature in the 1980's, when she sponsored a bill to broaden the scope of the Michigan Friend of the Court to include access/visitation. That change enabled Michigan Friend of the Court staff to help parents informally resolve access/visitation complaints as well as financial child support problems. As a result, Michigan had the most favorable collection-to-cost ratio in child support of any state in the U.S.; Michigan was collecting $8.33 in child support for every dollar spent to collect.

"Michigan's high child support collection rate, which Debbie Stabenow credited to Michigan's balanced family court system, was the single biggest reason that Congress first appropriated funds for access/ visitation demonstration grants in 1988," said CRC President David L. Levy. "We are glad to welcome Debbie Stabenow, now in her first term in Congress, as a CRC advisor."

Stabenow, who resides in Lansing, has a daughter and a son.

Sherwood Boehlert

Boehlert

Boehlert (known to one and all as "Sherry") has been a member of the House since 1982, representing New York's 23rd District, which includes Utica and Rome. A moderate Republican, Boehlert was described by U.S. News & World Report and National Journal as a moderate leader likely to determine the course of the 105th Congress. His main interests are "the three E's"—the environment, economic development, and education. He fought to protect funding for Head Start, public education, and student loan programs, and as a senior Republican on the House Science Committee, has worked on programs to attract top students into teaching and to encourage universities to focus more attention on undergraduate education.

Boehlert and Congresswoman Debbie Stabenow, who is also a CRC advisor, have both become members of the newly-formed Missing and Exploited Children Caucus in the House. On that caucus, they will be exploring ways to protect children.

Boehlert is a father of four and grandfather of two. He resides in New Hartford, with his wife Marianne.

Intellectual Property Protection

Charlie Ruggiero, who obtained trademark protection for the name and logo "Children's Rights Council" and the name and logo for our newsletter "Speak Out for Children" is a specialist in trademark, patent, copyright, and licensing law. He is a partner in the law firm of Ohlandt, Greeley, Ruggiero and Perle, 1 Landmark Square, Suite 903, Stamford, CT 06901, telephone (203) 327-6067.

Beat the Tax Man: Contribute to CRC

If you wish to consider leaving a bequest or property to CRC, please let CRC know of your generosity.

Contact your accountant or tax advisor on the best way to structure any such bequest.

Or contact CRC, and we can suggest an accountant or tax advisor to assist you.

Media Notes

CRC receives phone calls from the media on a regular basis. This has resulted in recent mention of CRC and our views in numerous media outlets, including Focus on the Family, a radio program carried on more than 1,000 radio stations, which reported on our finding that states with the highest amount of joint physical custody generally had the lowest divorce rate, and mentions in *U.S. News & World Report, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, and various other media.*

Donors are Appreciated

CRC thanks everyone who contributes to CRC in the charity drive that takes place in all federal government offices every Fall. CRC is listed as number 1513 in the Children's Charities of America listing, which is part of the Independent Charities of America. We also thank those who contribute to CRC in the Washington, D.C., and San Francisco (Bay Area) United Way campaigns.

We also thank those who contribute to CRC through their United Way in some other part of the country, where we are not listed, but where employers may sometimes allow employees to designate CRC.

CRC depends on volunteer help and contributions for its existence.

If you wish to make your tax-deductible contribution directly to CRC, send it to CRC, 300 I Street, Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002.

CRC on Internet

Interest in CRC on the Internet is growing, reports Bruce Kaskubar, CRC coordinator in Minnesota, who maintains CRC's Internet Worldwide Web site. For those of you with a browser, the home page's URL is http://www.vix.com/crc/ Bruce would like to field questions about CRC from individuals, as well as members of other groups.

Chapter News

Japan
Chapter Marches on UN

The Japan chapter of CRC says children and non-custodial parents are treated worse in Japan than in the U.S.

Although Article 24 of the Japanese constitution says that "in divorce...laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and essential equality of the sexes," the cultural attitude in divorce is that it's in the best interest of the child to remain with one parent, and not be confused by having access to the other parent. "More than 90% of custody awards are to the mother, and it is not unusual for non-custodial parents to not see their children at all," said Walter Benda, co-chair of CRC of Japan.

Benda says the situation for Japanese non-custodial parents is the same as for foreign-born non-custodial parents—usually no access to their children in divorce.

Benda has two daughters, Mari, 8, and Ema, 7, who he believes to be living near Tokyo with their mother. The children were born in Minnesota, but when Benda took a temporary job in Japan, his Japanese wife abducted the children from the family home, and he has not seen the children since then.

To bring public attention to the issue of international abduction of children, a coalition of groups, including CRC of Japan, led a protest group to the United Nations Building in New York City on October 2, 1997.

The protesters are parents who have internationally abducted children living in various countries.

CRC member Robert Rossi, whose child was abducted by his Vietnamese wife, and whose whereabouts are unknown, said that at the UN the group visited the Egyptian, British, and Philippine Consulates, Japanese Mission, and US Mission to the UN.

The parents told officials that Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which most countries other than the U.S. have ratified, requires signatory countries to "respect the right of the child who is separate from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis."

Benda (right) and others protest at UN

Article 8 on the convention says countries "shall undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference....where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, (member countries) shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to speedily re-establishing his or her identity."

"This may be the first time that a march was organized at the UN to bring attention to children's rights issues," said Benda.

"We all felt some fulfillment, and renewed hope. There is a core group of us committed to continuing these kinds of marches, and I believe eventually the public will take notice."

Benda may be contacted by phone in Virginia at 540/637-3799. The other co-chair of CRC of Japan, Brian Thomas, lives in Tokyo.

Maryland
Neutral Drop-Off /Pick-Up

A neutral drop-off and pick-up center for children of separated parents established by the Children's Rights Council of Maryland was featured in a front page *Washington Post* article July 5, 1997.

The *Post* stated that the center, at a church in Hyattsville, Maryland, is "a demilitarized zone for divorced parents."

One parent was quoted in the article as saying that getting his children from one parent to the other used to be much more of a strain. There was always some type of confrontation—something nasty in front of the girls." But now, he said, the transfer is peaceful.

CRC volunteers operate the center, which is open on Friday and Sunday evenings.

Judges in Prince George's County refer parents to the center, a result of more than a year of working out procedures with the court, said Harvey Walden, CRC coordinator for Maryalnd.

For copies of the *Washington Post* article, CRC members send a self-addressed stamped envelope to CRC, or provide us with your fax number. Non-members, send such an envelope with $5 for handling.

Alabama
Wilson Named Speaker

E.D. Wilson, CRC Coordinator for Alabama, has been elected Speaker of the Alabama Silver-Haired Legislature.

The 105-member body, established in 1991 through a joint resolution of the Legislature as an advocacy group for senior citizens and consumers, elected Wilson in March for a one-year term.

Increasingly restrictive Medicaid guidelines, legislation to force voter identification at the polls, and mandatory auto-liability insurance are among the issues before the Silver-Haired Legislature, said Wilson. But he also hopes to get the votes to pass a presumption for joint custody.

E. D. Wilsom

The Silver-haired legislature makes recommendations to the regular legislature for enactment into law.

"The Silver-Haired Legislature has a good track record of having its recommendations taken seriously by the folks in Mobile," said Wilson.

11th National CRC Conference

Continued from page 10

Kent State and John Carroll Universities, Ohio, who critiqued Obetz's and Bauserman's papers;
Senator Anne Cools, the Senate of Canada, Ottawa, "What Canada is Doing for Children and Families";
Ron Henry, Esquire, "National Trends in Family Law Legislation and How to Affect Them";
Ellen Levy, leader of Closing Circle.

Thank you to the CRC volunteers who helped at the conference:

Steve Baskerville, John Bauserman Sr., John Bauserman Jr., Ingrid Bough-Bell, Heather Burgess, Jill Hollandsworth, Bob Howard, Diana Levy, Ellen Levy, Ed Mudrak, Lawrence Peckmazian, Paul Robinson, Andy Ross, Murray Steinberg, Tom Vail, Rob Whitfield, Paul Wright, Mark Young. We also thank CRC Secretary Lynn Nesbitt.

CRC's Next Conference Our 12th.

Will be held in the Spring of 1999.
We will issue a call for
Papers from Interested Presenters
in the Spring of 1998.

National Parents' Day Coalition

CRC participated in the Third Annual National Parents' Day Coalition (NPDC) Awards Ceremony October 23, 1997, at the U.S. Capitol. W. Wilson Goode, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Regional & Community Services, U.S. Department of Education, spoke movingly of the important role that fathers play in their children's lives. Other speakers included former Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, President of the National Black Leadership Roundtable; Belinda Rollins, President of the NPDC, and CRC President David L. Levy.

Cincinnati is CRC's Third Largest Chapter

O'Brien

CRC of Cincinnati, Ohio, is CRC's 3rd largest chapter, after Nebraska (No. 1), and California (No. 2). The Cincinnati chapter is headed by Kevin O'Brien, who said the chapter is growing by extensive use of PSAs (free public service announcements), and monthly meetings with an expert (the December, 1997 meeting featured Dr. Israel Lichtenstein, a noted joint custody researcher who has spoken at CRC conferences). Chapter members are working to obtain a change in the domestic relations system to require that magistrates, who assist judges, have experience with non-traditional families, other than just being attorneys. "Domestic relations magistrates, like judges, need to have training in social work, family dynamics, or have other related experience, as well as an understanding of the literature on families, to recognize the fundamental importance of parent-child relationships," said O'Brien. O'Brien has a daughter, Jennifer, 17, from a previous marriage. He has been in divorce court on and off for 15 years, seeking to obtain frequent and continuing contact with his daughter, "and those experiences have shown me that groups such as CRC can have a positive influence on child and parent contact in non-traditional families." O'Brien is re-married, and has two stepchildren, Jake, 9 and Kate, 13.

EQUAL PARENTS' WEEK

Equal Parents' Week will be held July 28-August 1, 1998. Patti Diroff of California, who has managed this event in the past for COPS (Coalition of Parent Support) in California, has decided that this year she would like to handle the observance on behalf of the national Children's Rights Council, to give the week a national platform. So she is now CRC national coordinator of Equal Parents' Week. Patti will continue working with CRC of California, COPS, CRC chapters, and other organizations, in order to make this a truly national event. For information, phone or fax Patti at 909/591-3689.

PLEASE JOIN US IN SENDING A MESSAGE THROUGHOUT THE U.S. TO REFORM OUR LAWS:

EQUAL PARENTS' WEEK

July 28, 1998 - August 1, 1998

Pin a purple ribbon (dark or light) to your shirt, display it visibly on your car, your home or anywhere...where everyone can see, as a symbol that we want EQUAL responsibility for and EQUAL access to our children, motivated by our love for our children and determination to be meaningfully involved in their lives.

National Affiliate Organizations and Chapters

National Affiliate Organizations

Mothers Without Custody
(MW/OC)
P.O. 77, Box 27417
Houston, TX 77227-7418
Joint membership in MW/OC
and CRC: $35.00 a year

Parents Without Partners
(PWP)
Pat Boyd, president
401 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
phone: 312/644-6610
Members of PWP join CRC for
only $20.00 a year.

Stepfamily Association of
America (SAA)
Marjorie Engel, president
215 Centennial Mall South,
Suite 212
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
phone: 402/477-7837
Joint membership in SAA and
CRC: $35.00 for the first year

TELL ANY OF THE ABOVE ORGANIZATIONS THAT YOU WANT A JOINT MEMBERSHIP IN THEIR GROUP AND CRC

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CRC WANTS CHAPTERS IN EVERY STATE!!!

For development of chapters in states that do not yet have any CRC chapters, contact national CRC office at (202) 547-6227.

Join CRC, then ask for a copy of the 100-page CRC booklet that explains everything you need to know about affiliation. The cost of the booklet is $15.00.

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